

# The Freeman

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some such move was to be expected. Even a Government can not draw billions out of the air for an indefinite period, and something must be done to make up the deficit, pay the soaring expenses of our rum-navy and raise the wherewithal for the proposed thumping bonus to ship-owners in which Mr. Harding's sympathetic heart is so firmly enlisted.

WHILE we are on this agreeable subject we may note that the National City Company has placed on the market \$16 million of the \$40 million loan which the American Government with altruistic violence has compelled the Republic of Haiti to authorize. The bonds are offered to American investors at 96½, and what the untutored Haitians actually get out of that is doubtless something else again. We doubt very much that Haiti, which has to support out of its revenues an American occupational force and a full quota of American political dictators and officials, comes within the Administration's category of nations that live within their incomes, but perhaps Mr. Harding makes an exception to his rule of frugality (to paraphrase Mr. Lincoln's dictum) in the case of foreign Governments of American placeholders, by American marines and for American bankers. On the other hand the Haitian-Santo Domingo Independence Society has announced that the loan is protested by the entire population of the island, and that it will be repudiated as soon as Haiti recovers her independence. This state of mind, we think, might have given the frugal Mr. Harding pause in granting his benediction to this alien diversion of American money, but perhaps the Administration has information that leads it to believe that the recovery of Haitian independence is a matter too remote for American investors to worry about.

THE attempt of the American Government to call alcoholic spirits from the vasty deep is being watched by non-puritanic Europeans with mingled concern and amusement. For some time British comment on our sea-going Grundies has been growing increasingly caustic. Our puzzled editorial cousins view with no little trepidation the phenomenon of the spirit of Carrie Nation marching on victoriously at Washington. Recently, for instance, the *Saturday Review* betrayed considerable editorial dismay at the plight of a British vessel which was seized somewhere on the high seas last March by our rum-navy, and is apparently still held as a horrible example. The editor sets forth the facts in no carping humour, but he is plainly at a loss to understand the far-flung morality of Mr. Harding and his associates. "If this kind of policy develops," he concludes, "it will be unsafe for any ship with alcoholic liquors on board to put to sea at all."

FOR inefficiency, wastefulness and crookedness, the American bureaucracy is entitled to the red ticket. Mr. M. W. Kreigh, of Washington, an official of the American Mining Congress, has published figures to the effect that it costs the taxpayers of this country \$150 million annually to comply with the Federal tax-laws. He estimates that the preparation of returns and their accompanying schedules, lawyers' fees, the cost of conferences, preparation of evidence, general bookkeeping, and so forth, come to about this sum. Adding to this the cost of administering these laws, the actual upkeep of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which last year was a little over \$56 million, one finds that the total annual cost is very nearly ten per cent of the total taxes collected. This is an outrage and a disgrace. Any tax that costs ten per cent of its sum to get

## CURRENT COMMENT.

IN one of those whispered *communiqués* through which, with the anonymity of a Delphic priestess and the stealthiness of a bootlegger, the American Government is wont to impart to the American people its intention on important matters of policy, the Administration has announced that frugality is its motto in regard to letting American loans slip into the chests of those European Governments which are so fond of keeping up large establishments of generals and admirals on IOU's made out in favour of Uncle Sam. There had been some newspaper-rumours to the effect that the Administration was about to loosen up in this matter, and so the spirit-message is timely and reassuring. In effect, Mr. Harding's idea seems to be that not only will the Administration refrain from making loans to Governments that can not live within their incomes, but it will put a moral restraint on American bankers to keep them from giving financial aid and comfort to wastrel Governments.

THIS is all very prudent, and quite in accord with good morals as well, but we think the pose would have been carried off with more grace if it had not come just after the formal invitation issued by our Treasury Department to the American people to lend half a billion dollars or more to a certain Government which apparently will live beyond its income this year by somewhere between \$700 million and \$900 million. We refer of course to Mr. Mellon's new bond-issue at the generous interest of four and one-half per cent. Nominally, this money is to be used to redeem maturing Liberty bonds, as the Wilson Administration, in a spirit of pleasantries, called its financial war-brides. This phrase, as we recall, was distributed on a fifty-fifty basis; the politicians made off with our liberty, and, in the subsequent period of deflation, the bankers gathered in the bonds. Nominally, as we remarked before the dear, dead past interrupted us, the current issue is to serve for the retirement of Liberty bonds, but it is admitted that "some of the money," no inconsiderable portion, it is fair to assume, is to be used to meet current expenses.

THIS is interesting indeed. One would think that taxes were in all conscience sufficiently high to satisfy the spending-instincts of the most ambitiously extravagant of Governments, but it seems that Mr. Harding and his colleagues must pile still more debts on our backs in order—in a double sense—to make both ends meet. Of course



itself collected is not a tax; it is blackmail. If the American people tolerate that kind of administration, they deserve what they get. The old German bureaucracy was pretty inflexible, but it had three merits which ours has not. It was honest, intelligent and efficient; and these three virtues look mighty large to the contemplative American to-day.

FIVE of the jurors in the I.W.W. cases at Centralia, Washington, have now made affidavits to the effect that the seven workmen declared guilty of murder in the second degree and saddled with the maximum penalty of from twenty-five to forty years, were unfairly convicted. The jurors assert that they acquiesced in a verdict of second-degree murder with a recommendation for mercy, in the expectation that the defendants would secure light sentences, and also because they feared that in the state of caste-terrorism and public unreason then prevalent, a divided jury would result in a new trial and the hanging of innocent men. It will be recalled that the convictions followed the Armistice Day tragedy at Centralia three years ago, when parading members of the American Legion engaged in a battle with members of the I.W.W., and in the fusillades about the I.W.W. headquarters several persons, including the head of the local Legion Post, were killed. The Legion men declared the "wobblies" fired on the parade, but the workmen asserted that the paraders broke ranks to rush their headquarters in a deliberately planned raid, and when the bullets began to spatter they shot back in self-defence. Inasmuch as the place had been raided and looted by the Legionaries the year before, and the unfortunate union-men who were present had been badly beaten up, there might seem to be some point to their contention. The trial itself was the usual travesty of that period, with various persons connected with the prosecution making irrelevant provocative fulminations, the newspaper-beagles in full cry, and an army encamped at the court-house door ostensibly to guard the proceedings against a wholly imaginary I.W.W. raid. Incidentally the forces of law and order tore one defendant from his cell and lynched him after appropriate sadistic mutilations. The North-west District Defence Committee, at Seattle, is attempting to see justice done and to remove the stain from the name of the State.

IN Mr. Harding's appointment of a Federal Fact-Finding Commission to inquire into the operations of the coal-mining industry, there is something that reminds us of conditions in Russia before the revolution of 1905. At that time the Tsar's Government had a way of picking up the peasant with official finger-tips, turning him over, examining him very carefully, and then putting him down again and—publishing a report. Everybody knew what was the matter with the peasants; three-fourths of them had so little land that they could not produce a decent livelihood for themselves, and were thus altogether at the mercy of the landlords who could hire their labour, or let out land to them, at almost any figure. But the officials of the bureaucracy would not face this condition, or do the one thing necessary for its removal; they preferred to investigate, and to publish reports which are of great value as historical records, but could not be baked in the peasant's oven, or served up in his empty bowl. The American with his coal-commission is perhaps a little better off, in that he can get a bit of heat out of the fact-finders' report, by burning it in his stove. Beyond that, the difference does not amount to much, for the coal-mining business in this country is sick abed with the same ailment that afflicted agriculture in Russia, and the American Government is no more anxious than was the Government of the Tsar to diagnose the case, and to apply an effective treatment.

OUR good neighbour, the *Nation*, has done a worthy service in the cause of education in printing twenty-eight documents gathered from various sources, which cast a revealing light on much of the political thimble-rigging precedent to the world-war. If there were such a thing as an American educational system it could hardly find

more valuable material than these documents to point a moral and adorn a course in modern history; and the record is now sufficiently complete for such a course to reveal to the young idea, with appropriately documented chapter and verse, the picture of the war emerging from a tawdry diplomatic struggle between two groups of thieves who collectively possessed no more moral sense than would cover the point of a bayonet. Not the least interesting document in our neighbour's collection is that which shows how the heroic French Government embarked on the congenial business of forgery in its official Yellow Book. This is an instructive sample, and it is a fair guess that the various other Governments on both sides, in their rainbow of apologies, likewise sedulously mutilated the truth to fit their several propagandas. It is peculiarly fitting that the editor of the *Nation* should reproduce these papers for the enlightenment of his many liberal friends who, unlike himself, lost complete control of their sanity during the late unpleasantness.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE's speech at Manchester last Saturday may get him safely by the rocks and shoals, but it impressed us as a pretty weak defence of his behaviour in the crisis at the Straits. His aim, it appears, was, first, to secure the freedom of the Straits. Well, we should like to hear the opinion of our Russian friends about that. Second, he proposed to avert another European war. What really has happened, however, is that the Russians, Germans and Turks have been driven into just the kind of solidarity that argues worst for the ultimate peace of Europe. Besides, who backed the Greeks, anyway, in their recent military enterprises? Mr. George unquestionably said all he could, but there was precious little to say. He could say little for himself, and his defenders can say as little for him. Mr. Austen Chamberlain did his best, but his best was such that comment on it should mercifully be restrained. Mr. George is afloat on a Niagara, pulling desperately against the current, but in vain; and the falls are just below him.

MEANWHILE in his guarded tent, the Turk seems to have been dreaming to good purpose. He has got his demands in full, and it now remains to be seen how long he will rest content. That is all that can be said at present, except to remark one of the funniest antics that local journalism has ever cut. Our papers have got so used to representing the Allied Powers as running the world that they can not break the habit. They reported the conference at Mudania under such head-lines as, "Allied Terms handed to Turks," "Turks Conciliatory: Accept Allied Terms in Principle." Well, rather!—since the "Allied Terms" handed the Turks everything they wanted. We were reminded of Artemus Ward's description of his fight with a secessionist in Alabama, in which he says that "by an adroit movement I succeeded in placing my left eye agin the Sesesh's right fist."

THE protestations of British politicians and publicists that Britain intends to pay her debt to American taxpayers to the last cent, sir, are all very reassuring, unless one suspects that they protest too much; though we think the accompanying reminders that that portion of the money which was not borrowed at four and one-half per cent and re-loaned by the British Government at six and seven per cent, was spent in America, are not especially effective. Few British hotel-keepers, we imagine, would be inclined to absolve American tourists who cashed bad checks at the hotel-desk, on their plea that the money was spent on the premises. This matter comes to our attention via two editorial paragraphs on the same page of the *London Outlook*. The first paragraph is a pessimistic discussion of the plan to clean up Britain's debt to us through payments extending over twenty-five years. This, the *Outlook* declares, would entail the payment of £100 million a year, which would make an impossible drain on Britain's taxpayers. For all we know the *Outlook's* point may be sound. Yet in the other paragraph the *Outlook* views complacently the German reparations-project of two billion pounds, half-heartedly put forth by the realistic Mr. Keynes, which would entail annual payments of £100



million from the German people. Apparently what's sauce for the German Eagle is not sauce for the British Lion.

LAST week we remarked upon the fine co-operative spirit that the international petroleum-companies have shown, in patching up their quarrel over the oil-fields of Russia and framing a solid alliance against the Soviet Government. Such alliances as this contain all the elements of reality that one can discover in the League of Nations. They function admirably wherever the system of graft and monopoly is in danger; they operate to preserve this system, with all its profit-yielding possibilities, and thus instead of carrying us along towards everlasting peace, they maintain those very conditions which make wars worth while for the people who do most to provoke them. If the system of monopoly were restored to-day in Russia, the Standard Oil Company and the Royal Dutch-Shell interests would fall to quarrelling to-morrow over the gains, and the American and British Governments would stop threatening Russia, and begin at once to threaten each other, just as they have been doing all along in the matter of concessions in Mesopotamia.

THIS sort of thing does not happen because the companies or the Governments love fighting for its own sake; it happens because the purses and the side bets in this concession-game are the very largest that have ever been put up in this terrestrial prize-ring. During the years 1914-1921, companies of the Standard Oil group declared thirteen separate stock-dividends; the Standard of Indiana made a distribution at the modest rate of two thousand nine hundred per cent; recently the Kentucky company came through with 33 1/3 per cent, and the California company with 100 per cent; the New York concern has just made a 200 per cent donation, on top of a stock-dividend of 400 per cent declared in 1913; and now the directors of the Standard of New Jersey—the fattest company of the lot, and the one with the largest foreign holdings—have voted a distribution at the rate of 400 per cent on the common stock of the corporation, the cash value of the new shares at par being about \$500 million. These fabulous increases in capitalization are based largely upon an increase in the monopoly-value of natural resources, which the directors of the companies could not possibly have prevented if they had tried. As long as the international trough contains such juicy morsels as these, how, brethren, can we expect to see an end of shoving and squealing in the barnyard?

THOSE indefatigable humorists in Moscow are at it again. Not long ago our newspapers published long articles describing about 'steen million dollars worth of concessions in Siberia that the Soviet Government had arranged to fork over to the Russo-Asiatic Company as soon as the papers could be made out. The terms were liberal—liberal is no name for them. But alas! on 6 October the Soviet Government suddenly and dexterously yanked this luscious carrot right out of the Russo-Asiatic Company's hungry jaws, saying that "recent actions of the British Government are not regarded as indicative of a sufficiently friendly attitude to admit the signature of a contract of such magnitude." It is the same old story. Probably no anguish in the world is so acute as that of the conniving, thieving concessionaire who has his eye on Russia's riches—and how well those rascals in Moscow seem to understand it, and how rotten they are to stand the poor fellow on his head in this fashion as regularly as they do!

BUT if what they did to the Russo-Asiatic Company is injury, what they have just done to our own Sinclair Oil Company is insult. The day after the Soviet brethren reneged on the agreement with the Russo-Asiatic Company, they turned around and presented the Sinclair Company with an oil-concession covering the whole northern half of the island of Sakhalin. This was about as hospitable as it would be to offer your guest full freedom of the shark-pond to bathe in. The northern part of Sakhalin, as we explained two weeks ago, was cabbaged by the Japanese, ostensibly on account of the provoked

massacre at Nikolaievsk, but really because it is valuable territory, being well off in oil and other minerals. Japan still holds it; the American Government has never acknowledged her right to do so; and now the question is whether the Government will back the Sinclair Company in taking possession, and if not, why not? A special dispatch to the *New York Times* observes soberly that this concession "appears to be without any practical benefit." It is a terrible business to have to explain a good joke, or we would diagram this latest effort of the Soviet Government for the benefit of the *Times's* editorial staff.

FROM Germany comes the news that *Die Neue Generation*, of Berlin, the organ of what is in some respects the soundest woman's movement in the world, is threatened with suspension for lack of funds. In American money the amount needed annually to carry on the paper is a mere \$300; in marks, at their present value, it is prohibitive. *Die Neue Generation* has always been distinguished, among feminist journals, for its refreshing freedom from the itch for coercive legislation and its courageous rejection of compulsory asceticism for the unmarried woman. In its sober pages have appeared contributions by Havelock Ellis, Forel, the late Grete Meisel-Hess, and Drs. Freud and Jung. Indeed the list of its contributors includes many of the most distinguished writers and scientists of Europe, and the subjects have ranged from the Scandinavian movement for the protection of unmarried mothers and the illegitimate child to the erotic life of woman as abused under both prostitution and asceticism. These are all questions of the deepest interest to American women, who might themselves be contributing something to their solution if the suffragists had not captured the Seneca Falls movement and turned American feminism into a merely political movement. *Die Neue Generation* is doing pioneer work for the women of all countries, and one wishes our American feminists might show their recognition of this fact by undertaking to rescue it from such a preposterous end.

At the recent field-maneuvres of the French army—the first great assemblage of its kind since the war—many notables of the civil and military establishments were among those present. There were, however, a great number of absentees, and it is of them that Pierre Lelandais speaks in a bitter and compelling poem which appeared recently in the columns of *Le Progrès Civique*—"Le Retour des Morts":

*Nous sommes morts, soldats de France,  
Pour que la Terre en délivrance  
N'ait plus d'armes ni de soldats . . .  
Et voici toujours qu'on enrôle  
Et qu'on crie: 'Arme sur l'épaule.'  
Nous ne sommes pas morts pour ça! . . .*

*Les voix que votre foule acclame,  
Pour jouer quelque nouveau drame  
Dés demain vous appelleront:  
'Fais-toi tuer: c'est le dernière!'  
Et vous viendrez voir sous la terre  
Tous ceux qui sont morts sans raison.*

"It was not for this . . ." say "the war's great dead"; but elsewhere *Le Progrès* cartoons a politician who mocks them. Speaking at the dedication of a war-monument, with his hand on his own brave heart, he says. "If it is necessary to recommence the sacrifice, we shall die a second time. . ."

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## TOPICS OF THE TIME.

### SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE.

THE new president of Colgate University, Mr. George Barton Cutten, said some excellent things in his inaugural address. We were impressed, for instance, by his observations upon the shadow and substance of democracy, and the mischief of taking the one for the other. There is no possible doubt that, as he says, the word democracy has become a fetish in this country, while of the thing for which the word stands, the actual substance of democracy, we have nothing. One can quite well agree with Mr. Cutten when he says that "we have a Government of the people, but never by the people, and only incidentally for the people"; but yet, because he contented himself with a mere statement of this rather obvious fact without showing cause for it, one may perhaps complain a little. It is well enough to make clear the fact that we have but the name of democracy and not the reality, but if we are ever to have the reality, one must do more than this. One must be a little more concerned with the *why* of the thing; one must deal with the *wherefore* as well as the *what*, as John Hales said. Mr. Cutten is explicit enough about the *what*, he is interested enough in the fact, but he shows no intellectual curiosity about the *wherefore*.

Mr. Cutten is correct in assuming that democracy expresses itself in government of the people, by the people and for the people. But now, under what conditions can such government be had; under what conditions can the people, of, for and by themselves, really rule? This is the fundamental question. Ever since the idea of the French Revolution overspread the Western mind, it has been assumed that those who vote, rule. The more there are who can vote, the closer the approach to democracy. Logically, democracy is attained when every one is allowed to vote.

But suffrage is practically universal in this country. Now that women can vote, the restrictions on suffrage are pretty well within the minimum set by reason. Yet this free exercise of the franchise has not, as Mr. Cutten points out, brought us near democracy. Comparisons might even show that there is closer approximation to actual democracy in countries where the franchise is not so largely exercised, where a smaller proportion of the population enjoys the right to vote. Obviously, too, a mere extension of the franchise gives no prospect of bringing us very much nearer democracy. Half our population, approximately, was recently enfranchised overnight by Constitutional provision; yet can anyone really make himself believe that this sudden and enormous extension of the franchise will bring us any nearer to government actually of, for and by the people? There is no doubt whatever that it can not and will not do this.

Does it not seem, then, that a person in Mr. Cutten's position, having chosen to prepare a deliverance on this subject, should have suspected that there is something wrong with this tacit, general assumption that those who vote, rule; and that the suspicion would have led him to examine this assumption? We think that the students of Colgate University are very unfortunate in being deprived of the results of such an examination; for there is a great lack of logic and relevancy in the miscellaneous observations which Mr. Cutten makes at this juncture. "With only thirteen and one-half per cent of the people able to

get through college, . . . and but twenty-five per cent able to comprehend the significance of the ballot, democracy is out of the question." Well, but if Mr. Cutten had proceeded, as we think he logically should have proceeded, to examine the conditions under which democracy is *not* out of the question, he would have been led to other conclusions than those which appear in his address; for example, that the power to rule should be placed more and more in the hands of the intelligentsia who "are sure to be found in the colleges"!

The fact is that those who vote do not rule; they have never ruled and never will—never, that is, in virtue of being able to vote. Those who *own*, rule; and they rule because they own. Those who control the economic destiny of others, really rule them. If Mr. Cutten's students will look into the matter, they will find that political rule, so-called, is but an attorneyship through which actual rule is exercised. Imagine, for the sake of convenience, an island of a hundred square miles, a population of one thousand, and owned by one man. That one man actually rules the other nine hundred and ninety-nine, because he has absolute control of access to their source of subsistence. No matter how early and often they vote, or what system of politics they set up, or how intelligent they are; as long as the one man keeps on owning, he keeps on ruling. The others can live only at his pleasure and on his terms, unless they get off the island. Under those conditions, democracy is impossible.

Now imagine the island expanded to the size of the United States; the population increased to 110 millions; and the total area of the island owned by one-tenth of the population. Then the nine-tenths would be actually ruled by the one-tenth because access to the source of their subsistence would be absolutely controlled by the one-tenth. No matter what the form of government, no matter how many of the population voted or how intelligent they were; as long as the one-tenth continued to own, they would continue to rule, and democracy would be impossible. In proportion as ownership became more diffuse—as progressively two-tenths, six-tenths, eight-tenths came to own, the social organization would progressively approximate democracy. When ten-tenths owned, there would then be democracy; and short of that, never.

Democracy, in short, is an affair of economics, not of politics. When one man controls access to another's source of subsistence, he rules him. When ten men control access to ten thousand men's source of subsistence, they rule the ten thousand. When ten per cent of the population of the United States control access to the source of subsistence of the other ninety per cent, they rule them. No matter what the form of government may be; no matter whether suffrage be extended to include children yet unborn; no matter the degree to which the general intelligence is raised; as long as the ten per cent keep on owning—owning access to the source of all subsistence, the land, the natural resources—they will rule the ninety per cent; and democracy can not exist.

We commend these observations especially to the students of Colgate University. We respectfully ask them to go carefully over their president's inaugural address and examine it from this point of view. We think they will find that government of, for and by the people is quite conceivable, quite possible, but that its inexorable condition is economic, not political. Mr.



Cutten himself, in fact, hits the mark precisely, though he appears to be unaware that he has done so. "If all people were born free and equal," he observes, "democracy would be . . . possible." Just so; if they were born, as conceivably they might be, economically free, and born to equal opportunity of access to the source of their subsistence. The trouble is just that they are not so born; and they are not so born, because access to the source of their subsistence is monopolized. We suggest that the students of Colgate University pay their new president a graceful compliment by organizing a public debate upon the topic, What is democracy?—one side of the debate supporting Mr. Cutten's theses, and the other those that we have here adduced.

### O, COUSINS!

It is true that Mr. Lloyd George personally got a bad press in England on his Near East fiasco. For the head of a Government to bet on the wrong horse is the unpardonable sin, especially in a country where the taxpayers have a lively appreciation of the fact that they must pay the losings. Radicals and liberals and Tories joined in a round of clouting the Prime Minister over the head in hearty English fashion—and then they stopped to think, and the comedy began. With one of his quick shifts Mr. Lloyd George conceded Eastern Thrace to the Turks, a rearrangement whereby Britain would lose virtually nothing of value, and for the rest of the problem he put forth that useful trick phrase: "The Freedom of the Straits." In effect, Mr. Lloyd George argued that the heart of the world must break and civilization perish unless Britain secured the freedom of the Straits. On this preachment he immediately compelled the enthusiastic backing of practically the whole British press of every shade of opinion. With a single pirouette this political lightning-change artist had the stalls and galleries together acclaiming his act. The phrase echoed ringingly through the Dominions and the little kept nations, and in Washington the British ambassador strolled over to the State Department, whereafter the docile Mr. Hughes issued a formal *pronunciamiento* in favour of Mr. Lloyd George's new freedom.

Why, one might be disposed to wonder, should the future of civilization and all that sort of thing hinge on the freedom of the Dardanelles, as conceived by Mr. Lloyd George? As far as this country is concerned, the freedom of the strait between Calais and Dover would be infinitely more important. Both the English Channel and the Dardanelles are perfectly free in time of peace. During the recent war few if any of our merchants lay awake o' nights worrying about the closed Dardanelles, but American manufacturers and shipowners alike lost enough money to make up a very decent bill of reparations from the fact that American shipping that found it necessary to venture into the English Channel was blocked by British mine-fields and generally could not escape being held up and rifled by the British navy. As far as international trade is concerned the freedom of the Dardanelles is a relatively trivial matter as compared with the freedom of the Straits of Gibraltar or the Suez Canal, but if there have been proposals on the part of the British Government to turn over either the Rock or the Canal to a so-called international administration, these have not been loud enough to reach our ears. These are not great moral issues. Melted in the crucible of British imperialist opinion, the "freedom" of the Dardanelles has emerged as a great moral issue.

The altruistic outburst in the British press was generally guided by the essential delicacies. The editors avoided any hints that the overlordship of the Dardanelles carried with it the control of access to Russia's warm-water ports, with their treasures of grain and oil, and that the Straits formed the vital link in the overland route to India and incidentally to the Mesopotamian oil-fields. A writer in the *Saturday Review*, in a consideration of the military and commercial value of the Straits to the British Empire, did somewhat indiscreetly hint at these matters, but in the main the Straits were discussed on a plane of undiluted idealism. The League of Nations scarcely figured in the prospectus of the guardianship of the Straits. Indeed, why should it? The League, as every British editor knows, has not sufficient power and authority to police the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens; and any Power that has the mandate for the Straits will as surely close them to its enemy in time of war as the bells ring in the Sabbath in Christian lands. In other words, the magic phrase has no meaning whatever.

The liberal brethren of the British press have been fully as clamorous for the freedom of the Straits as the conservatives. The call of the London *Times* for "a policy of firmness" is no more emphatic than the loud outcry of the esteemed Manchester *Guardian* about the awful state the world has come to if Turkey is to have her Straits again. The *Daily News* is as insistent as the *Daily Mail*, and the determination of the *Saturday Review* is reproduced in the *New Statesman* and the London *Outlook*. The *Outlook*, commenting on an interview given by Kemal Pasha to the Chicago *Tribune*, in which he points out that Mr. Lloyd George is a trickster and a knave whose word is worthless, is inclined to own that soft impeachment, but maintains in the next breath the unsullied purity of "British aims in the East," as if they were entirely dissociated from the head of the British Government, and as if the Government's long record in such matters were distinctly above reproach. The *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* alike declare with melancholy firmness that Britain in her own interest would be glad to abandon her lands acquired in the Near East, but must in the interest of humanity, continue to shoulder her imperial burden and take all steps to make it secure. One liberal paper solemnly warns its women readers that their husbands' salaries might be stopped if the Kemalists regained the Straits!

Some of the embattled editors make an appeal to more sacred things. "The graves of Gallipoli remind us that one of the chief things for which we fought and defeated Turkey was the keeping open of the Dardanelles," exclaims the *Saturday Review*. *Punch* pictures a solemn John Bull patting Mr. Lloyd George on the shoulder and declaring: "If you are resolved to defend the freedom of the Straits and the sanctity of our graves in Gallipoli you will have the country and the empire with you." Apparently *Punch* and the *Saturday Review* still maintain a Wilsonian ignorance of the secret treaties, which leave no possible doubt that the graves at Gallipoli are there, not because of an attempt to make the Straits free, but because of an attempt to turn them over to the Russian Tsar as his share of the war-loot. In any case it seems odd to speak of the sanctity of the graves while Mr. Winston Churchill is still at large.

In all this decorous chorus the only dissonances



are furnished by the London *Daily Herald* and the London *Communist*. The *Herald* states bluntly that whoever holds the Straits, Christian or Moslem, will close them in war-time, and "only hypocrisy and ignorance can blink this fact." As for the irreverent *Communist* it demands in black type, "Who'll Cut Throats for Kerosene?" and "Who'll Bleed to Make Fat Men Fatter?" and its huge cartoon shows Lloyd George kneeling before a smoking altar labelled "New Wars," on which the worker is being sacrificed for the gratification of plump, silk-hatted deities called Munitions, Minerals, Oil and Vested Interests. British Communists are useful citizens, and they seem to get more fun out of life than most of their tory brethren.

We have enlarged on this remarkable geyser of journalistic sentiment, not with a view to holding up our cousins to derision, or in any pharasaical spirit. No American, surely, is in a position to cast stones at imperialist sentiments manifested in another country, no matter how hypocritically they may be presented and accepted. We have our own Mr. Hughes. We have middle-class newspapers of our own. American imperialism differs in no respect from the British brand, but the latter, fortunately for us, is of much larger calibre, and we are sure our diligent imperialist statesmen must envy the ability of their British brethren to gobble up great spaces of lands and waters and to keep behind them a united press declaring that they are serving the Lord God. Our spirit is one of sympathy rather than mockery. It is a piteous thing indeed to see conscientious editors cheering while vicious politicians plot the ground for more graves at Gallipoli and points east.

### THE FAILURE OF A THEORY.

ACCORDING to our interpretation, the history of Russia during the last half-dozen years is extremely damaging to the Marxian theory of the social revolution. The stimulus to revolt seems to have been felt almost as keenly by the Russian peasantry as by the industrial workers, and certainly the peasants have been more successful than the proletarians in the post-revolutionary conduct of productive operations. In a country like the United States, where the agricultural population has never borne such burdens as were laid upon the Russian peasantry, the progress of industrialization and the growth of the proletariat may increase the likelihood of revolt, but it does not by any means follow that the ability of the labour-force to control and carry on the operations of production will increase in like proportion. Indeed it seems to us that the possibility of the achievement, by any sudden change, of anything like economic democracy, is decreased as the scale and scope of industrial and commercial operations is extended.

For the Russian peasant, the process of revolution was the simple one of the *Jacquerie*. Reconstruction was likewise a simple matter, for when the landlords had been expelled, the peasants extended to the estates a system of allotment and cultivation which had previously been in vogue within the holdings of the village-commune. Thus it was not necessary for the peasants to unite under a centralized leadership, or to accept and act on a complex programme, or to adopt overnight a new way of life; they had learned by years of hard experience to maintain themselves in comparatively isolated, semi-coöperative groups, and each of these groups was prepared to engage in

self-directed labour on the landlord's estate, the morning after the manor house was burned.

The industrial workers were in a different case altogether. For them, as for the peasants, the revolution was a comparatively simple matter; but the task of reconstruction was infinitely complex. Here there was no question of extending to new factories and new mines a system of production with which the workers were already familiar. Year after year, within the narrow limits of their holdings, the peasant-communes had functioned in the actual conduct of agriculture, but the labour-unions, where they existed, had had no such significance in the conduct of industry. Indeed the industrial workers had had no experience in self-direction, except in respect to occasional withdrawal of labour.

Being thus without practical knowledge of the conduct and control of production, the industrial class was faced with a problem much more complex than that which confronted the peasantry. If the peasants had not been prepared by experience for the task of reconstruction, they could still have worked out their destiny by experimentation. The comparative self-sufficiency of the communes would have permitted a wide diversity in opinion and procedure; but in the case of the factories nothing of the sort was possible. Here the only alternative to a return to the old regime seemed to be the common action of millions of people in accordance with a plan which very few of them understood, even in theory. In our opinion, any attempt at reconstruction on such a basis puts upon human nature a strain which it simply will not bear. The demands that it makes in the way of unanimous and intelligent action on the part of the masses, and wise generalship on the part of their leaders, can hardly be met this side of Paradise. If, then, Russia has not already relapsed into the economy of pre-war days, it is not so much the ability of the Bolshevik leaders that has prevented it, though they have sometimes shown themselves wiser than Solomon; it is first of all, we think, the experience of communal life which has taught the peasants how to utilize in some measure of co-operation, the possibilities which were created by the revolution.

An industrialized society gives its members little practical training of this sort, and the advocates of revolution are not much concerned to make the shortage good. Usually they preach a doctrine which can not become effective in practice until it has been very generally accepted in theory, and must then be acted on hastily and in wholesale fashion, without previous experimentation or experience. In the prospect of such action, we find the promise of disaster only, followed by a slow, painful return to the old regime.

It seems to us that those who contemplate the democratic control of productive operations by the producers, should be able to see that the acceptance of a theory, even its unanimous and intelligent acceptance, can not adequately prepare the workers in industry to participate in the new task laid out for them. The ideal of democratic control makes a great appeal to certain elements of organized labour; but if the aim is ever to be realized, it must come about through the gradual extension of co-operative methods to one plant after another. If the resources of nature were free and labour were at a premium, this gradual extension would be much easier than it is; but in any case there is no prospect that the actual conduct of industrial operations can be successfully democratized by any wholesale revolution.



## OCTOBER IN ARCADY.

To awaken to the twitter of the birds, to throw up the blind and greet the dazzling sunshine—how better could one start an October day? Weeks ago the birds gathered for their migration to the South, the trees and meadows were thronged with starlings, thrushes and red- and yellow-winged blackbirds, and I thought of the hours when I should miss their beauty, their music and their companionship.

The bird-boxes near the house have long been empty, though I saw the courting of the wrens, the robins, the catbirds and the orioles and watched the wrens, at least, raise two broods in their tiny houses hung from the trees almost within arm's reach. The catbirds, nothing daunted by my passing to and fro, built their nests, laid their grey-blue eggs, and raised their young in a shrub close beside the pump! The orioles sang to me from the apple tree near by, first their song of mating-time, and then their fuller, richer song of midsummer. I searched far and near for their nests, and only after the young birds had left them did I discover one on a low-swinging bough in the orchard. I remember the joy of watching a pair of orioles, one June, build their nest on a drooping bough of a cut-leaf maple just opposite my window. We became so well acquainted that they would perch in the tree and answer my whistle.

Below the house the yellow-hammers and the cheeky red-headed woodpeckers flitted in and out of their holes in a tall dead tree, and in June the humming-birds fairly took possession of the rock-garden. Half a dozen of them, with their whir and gentle "cluck" would flit back and forth above the flowers, poising, now and then, for a deep draught of honey from the wild columbine. Whether because the honey was particularly delicious, or because the gay red and yellow of the blooms attracted them, they seemed to claim the columbine as their own. Let a trespasser dare set foot in "their" garden and they would fly at him and almost brush against him, just darting away before quite reaching him. Once I had the great happiness of seeing a humming-bird's nest at close range, the mother bird feeding her tiny, tiny, nestlings with bits of thistle-down—so it seemed to me. But even then the bird was never still; she fluttered and quivered as if frightened by her curious visitor. Often have I seen them poised to take honey from a flower, but there was always the flutter of the wings, the quivering of the body. This year I examined the humming-birds at my leisure while they perched, like any other bird, on the fence near by.

Now the garden's appearance is all changed. Where the yellow lady-slippers, the violets, the columbine and Dutchman's-breeches—and, later, Queen Anne's lace, tall anemones and red field-lilies—held their carnival, the purple, blue and white asters, goldenrod and yellow foxglove now flaunt their autumn tints before me. The trees have taken on a ruddier hue. Summer is gone, and autumn fast approaches. Yet to-day the bluebirds came back and took possession of a bird-house. I saw a pair of them trying, by turns, to squeeze into a wren's house. They struggled valiantly but finally flew away to a larger box. Do they think that summer has returned, and is it possible that they will raise another brood? The plovers circled above my head as I walked across the dew-laden golf-links this morning. They have been about the links all summer and look indifferently upon the golfers as they walk about carrying their clubs; but let a club be inadvertently lifted to one's shoulder and there is a sudden startled cry, and away they go. Alas, the plover—the farmer's friend—has reason enough to fly from anything that looks like a gun!

From the hilltop I saw a huge maple in scarlet splendour, and in another direction a herd of gentle Guernseys, which seemed almost a part of the autumn woods behind them. Here and there was a note of more vivid colouring, as if scarlet and golden baskets hung from these russet trees. Hundreds of meadow larks were running about the greens. I have lately learned, to my surprise, that these are really game-birds, having the game-odour which any hunting-dog will detect.

Now that the sun sets farther to the south, the dense woods to the west no longer hide it and I can watch from my cottage-window the great ball of ruddy gold sink behind the wooded hills, and enjoy the purple horizon and the rose glow above it, and watch for the first appearance as evening darkens, of Venus in the south. The lake is beautiful at all seasons and all hours—the water rippling and glistening in the sunlight, and the fish flopping lazily above the surface here and there. The reflections are ever changing: here it is a field of corn-shocks, with golden pumpkins or ripened grain at their bases, or a field of green alfalfa with an orchard of red apples as a background; there a rocky ledge with the daily reddening woodbine trailing to the

water's edge, or a less rugged shore where the yellow berries of the bittersweet mingle with the purple clusters of the wild grape vine. Lovelier still is the silver path of the full moon, and the myriad stars gleaming so brightly in the placid lake as to make one feel that one is suspended in space with stars all about one.

Yes, October is here. Already the ducks are coming from the north. Great flights of mallards pass over the lake. Partridge-shooting begins. These are evidences beyond dispute—but summer lingers with warm days of sunshine and to-day I plucked a white rose in my garden, a Frau Drüschi as beautiful as any grown in June, and I found violets in bud, with new spring-green leaves, and tender young lady-slipper plants. Even the syringa thinks it is June and is in bloom again. I glance above me and see the silvery moon with a fleecy cloud wafted now and then across her face, and the stars gleaming softly, and recall the day just past: it is difficult to believe that summer is gone.

HELEN SWIFT.

## THE END OF AN EPOCH.

No one who has watched the movement of events in the United States during the past few years can escape the conclusion that certain fundamental changes are taking place in the groundwork of our national life. To compare the America of the post-war period, with its rejuvenated Ku-Klux-Klanism, its anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, political snooping, intellectual conformism and various other mischiefs; to compare this America with the professionally tolerant, belligerently democratic America of pre-war days is to become convinced that new forces must be operating to remodel completely the environment in which we live.

These forces and the changes they are effecting in the national life, owe their existence to the peculiarities of America's economic development, peculiarities which have been the source of our inconsistencies of character, our conflicts of profession and performance. Almost from the beginning of our national existence, but especially since the Civil War, our national life has been founded on an economic paradox. We have been a frontier-nation building up the greatest industrial system in the world. The demands of these two economic forces—the frontier on the one hand and machine-industry on the other—have been directly opposite. The settlement of the frontier called for strong, resourceful individualists ready to mould their life with their own hands; the expansion of machine-industry required docile, patient masses who would accept without question whatever life offered.

For many years the frontier drew the bulk of our American-born and our early North European immigrants away from industry. As long as the virgin West presented an avenue of escape it was, of course, almost impossible to keep large numbers of these men to the unchanging, horizonless drudgery of the factory and mine. But the growth of machine-industry depends upon the presence of an ever-increasing number of labourers who will undertake its unskilled "dirty work"; for it must be remembered that as mechanical industry advances the amount of unskilled work to be done increases. American industry during the period when natural resources were freely accessible, solved this problem in a way that has vitally affected our entire group-life. By utilizing the attractions of the frontier it drew from Europe an unending stream of immigrants for its mines and mills. Thus for over sixty years these two economic processes of settling the frontier and developing machine-industry went on simultaneously, dragging in their wake that mongrel, nondescript thing known as American culture.

We stand to-day at the close of that epoch of our national development. The frontier and all that it stood for has definitely disappeared. Only industry



is left. Of course there is nothing in this outcome that could not have been foreseen; for from the outset the amount of land to be settled was strictly limited. The frontier, by definition, is that territory holding less than two people to the square mile. By 1890, according to the official census-takers, there was no longer any such marginal land in the United States. As the frontier closed, industry drew together large masses of people and concentrated them in cities. From 1890 to 1920 the city advanced rapidly upon the country, although we still remained, as a whole, an agricultural nation. The last census, only two years ago, showed that America is for the first time in its history, by actual count, an urban, industrialized nation. Thus the future of America now depends upon the future of its industry.

But the disappearance of the frontier is written not only in the statistical records, but also in subtle changes which are taking place in our national character. The picture of the United States most often drawn by the conventional newspaper-editorial and the one that was generally accepted by Europe before the war, depicted us as a people of the glad hand and the hard head. Our country offered a refuge for the oppressed of all lands; it was a place where every man who was willing to work hard could become millionaire or president. It minded its own business in the field of international affairs and stood ready always to play big brother to little nations threatened by danger. Its people were fourteen-carat democrats among whom all men were equal and all blood was red. They were also hospitable and extravagant, almost professionally tolerant and bluff. But there was another side to our character. We were the men who forged ahead and always had to be shown. Pragmatic and mechanically inventive, we had little time for art, intellect and other falderals. Instead we rushed on to our destined goal, perfect examples of efficiency and organization, always hurried, always single-minded, always materialistic and money-mad. Add a little puritanical official morality here and there, a little furtive sexual laxness, a dash of Southern chivalry and certain other similarly minor attributes, and you have a fairly good composite picture of American life as it looked even to the superficial observer only a few years back.

There were discordant undertones, but they were barely heard. Now suddenly the undertones have become the dominant melody and the major chords of yesterday linger only as faint echoes. The old folk-ways are giving way, and we are slowly adjusting ourselves to the new situation. In time the adjustments will be crystallized and accepted; but, as always, the transition is chaos.

Perhaps the most clear-cut illustration of the change in our traditional national character is seen in our metamorphosis from an isolated, "big-brother" nation to a people as thoroughly imperialistic and predatory as the best of the European-Asiatic brotherhood. Yet given the economic changes that have taken place in our country, this metamorphosis was inevitable. Imperialism, after all, is nothing more than a system of State aid for the private appropriation of natural resources. Through several decades, expanding American industry found all the raw materials it needed within the boundaries of its own country. It had only to push its way westward, following the frontier. For had not the wise fathers hedged it about with protection? Keeping other nations off our grass had become a doctrine backed by the national honour (and all that that involved); rounding our boundaries

most profitably had been made our "manifest destiny." But now that the limits of domestic appropriation have been reached, America has abruptly left the pedestal from which she watched international affairs for so many years, in order to protect her greedy child by an admirably long and effective boarding-house reach.

Yet however profoundly the disappearance of the frontier and the complete triumph of industry may have changed the relations between our nation and others, the changes wrought in the relations between individuals within the country are even more deep-rooted and significant. One of the things upon which the old America prided itself most was the fluidity of its class-lines; the ease with which "office boy could become captain of industry" and any ambitious worker could rise above the workers' ranks. By examining the cases of those men who began poor and amassed wealth in America one soon learns that the trick could be turned only in one of two ways. One founded a fortune either—as did the Rockefellers, the Carnegies, etc.—upon the shrewd manipulation of some essential natural resource, or—as did the Foxes, the Lowes, the Fords, etc.—by getting into a new line of business early enough to grow with it. Moreover, even those men who broke away from the hopeless drudgery of wage-work and attained moderate independence had to build their success on a similar foundation. Either they utilized the free land of the West to escape from the hopeless round of industry or they embarked on small business ventures which had some chance of success because they lay in a field neglected or not yet pre-empted by the giants.

The present aspect of economic conditions in America makes it evident that the day of this considerable class-fluidity is gone. For after one grants our successful men all the cleverness one will, one must also admit that their success required the existence of another element, which we may call material opportunity, i. e., unowned natural resources or free land or a young industry. With the disappearance of the frontier, with the monopolization of all natural resources and with the entry to big business securely held by a closed financial group, this element of success has been put virtually out of the reach of the cleverest "outside" man. All in all, therefore, we seem to be in for a steady hardening of our class-lines. More and more, men will find themselves held throughout life in the same economic class into which they were born.

In the same manner all our old American traits are being remoulded. While an unsettled country can afford to welcome new-comers, a settled, industrialized country has a sufficient problem in providing for its own people. Consequently the "refuge for the oppressed" has been padlocked with immigration-laws. Our boasted democracy, again, so indigenous a growth in a young frontier-nation, is toppling under the weight of an established ruling-class and a growing bureaucracy.

But the economic change through which we have passed has also brought some distinct advantages with it. For one thing, the very deepening of class-lines must appear a desirable thing to those who believe that a fundamental social revolution is essential to the future welfare of the world. The triumph of industry, for another, is giving us art and philosophy. As a frontier-people, continually occupied with wresting a day-to-day living from



nature, continually on the move, continually interested as a group in building up a nation, as individuals in taking advantage of opportunities for getting rich, we had no time for the finer, more subtle relationships of life. We had eyes for nothing but the definite, useful things designed to serve an immediate and obvious purpose. But art demands leisure from living in which to think about life; it requires an anchored civilization, sufficiently developed to have a past as well as a future; it needs a group sufficiently sure of itself to admit the validity of inner experience and to accept without fear all manifestations of its instinctive and emotional life. In our theatres, our novels, our poetry, our music, we are seeing the first promise of such an art; not in a few isolated figures bitter with neglect, but in a joyfully hailed, eagerly watched body of artists.

We must, then, accept the fact that one aspect of the economic paradox upon which our national life has rested for so many years has disappeared. The frontier has gone. One need have no very large gift of prophecy to be able to forecast the major developments of the next few years. They are written plainly between the lines of the existing record. Industry can no longer draw its unskilled labour from Europe. Unless the bars against the importation of coolie-labour be let down, which at present seems quite unlikely, our unskilled labour must be recruited hereafter from American workers. We have already seen that three newly arisen economic factors will serve to push the American workers into these bottom ranks of labour—that industry will continue its inroads upon craft-work, leaving unskilled labour the only thing open for more and more workers; there will be no possibility of escape through the frontier; similarly there will be little chance for any large number of men to escape permanently through small business.

In its totality this situation means simply that the present ranks of our workers, forced more and more to the poorer, less interesting and more hopeless places in industry and finding themselves unable to escape through the usual forms of individual effort, will have to seek other ways out. Many workers undoubtedly will turn to emigration as a way of escape. The human tides will move in new directions. But migration, as always, can exert only a more or less limited appeal; more limited in this case because there is another more formidable weapon ready to the hands of the workers—the collective effort of unionism. Thus, with the crystallizing of class-strata and consequently of class-antagonisms, there will come an inevitable sharpening of the conflict between labour and capital in America.

There would seem to be only two possible resolutions of this conflict: the development of a benevolent industrial autocracy, or a continuance of the struggle until it comes to a show-down. There are two considerations that make the first resolution seem most unlikely. The first, and certainly the less important, is the frontier-training of our industrial autocrats. Accustomed to the opposition of a weak labour-force, and schooled in the easy victories that come to a powerful organization pitted against guerrilla-fighters, they have acquired too deep-rooted a faith in the efficacy of force. But more significant still, big business is getting more and more in the way of free, competitive production. What we call big business

appears to be after all, merely the use of industrial equipment and technology for private profit. The legitimate purpose of industrial equipment, however, is to provide bread, clothes, shelter and heat for the masses of the people; and if the desire for profit is tangling up the productive process even half as much as industrial engineers say it is, no compromise that allows this desire to continue to be regarded as legitimate will prove ultimately satisfactory.

We are left, therefore, with the conclusion that we are facing an industrial conflict growing steadily sharper, which will lead, sooner or later, to a show-down. If the movements of our Government thus far constitute any index of its future action, we shall find the wealth and power of the employing-class, backed by State and Federal troops, injunctions, repressive laws, prisons, labour-boards, etc., pitted against the numerical strength and the strategic industrial position of labour. All the indications seem to point towards a long and bitter struggle. Unattractive as this prospect may appear, it is hard to see how we can logically infer another from the existing facts; and, after all, it offers at least a promise of a new deal. There is some slight comfort in the knowledge that although reaction is having its day, the handwriting is already on the wall.

Sylvia Kopald.

### A MINOR PROMETHEUS.

JOHN DAVIDSON walked into English literature with a chip on his shoulder, and later, through a kind of perverse magic, his burden lengthened into the beam of a cross, which he could carry no farther. This is his tragedy. It is not altogether a personal tragedy; it is an artistic one, and perhaps in so being it is the sorrier. Contrast him with Marlowe. If Marlowe was a rebel, he was nevertheless a glorious rebel, whereas Davidson was a bitter and defeated one. The young Elizabethan transcended the limits of verse, saw beyond all expression the shining and unattainable beauty of Helen, and was content: but Davidson, who saw no Helen but only nothingness, strove vainly all his life against the limits of Form. Art itself was inadequate for him, and he desired some new mode of expression into which he could pour all the "over-stimulating current of mental activity" that was in him. Every weapon—ballad, testament, novel, play—snapped like wood in his hands, so that he tried perforce to storm Parnassus with his naked fists. Marlowe's death is pitiable only, for to him it was given to sing incomparably and die, but the mysterious suicide of Davidson is thick with horror because, in a quite literal sense, the poet in him had never completely lived.

This sense of never quite succeeding is the flaw that runs throughout most of his work. His early dramas, for instance, artificial pasticcios out of the Elizabethans, are not convincing, and when they do escape into reality, it is into reality of the wrong kind. "Smith," which is undoubtedly much the best of them, has touches of life that are unfortunately not truly dramatic touches. Consider, for example, this:

Far up the mountain children's voices ring;  
The quilters cry; and past the ivied inn  
A chastened brook tells all the pebbled beads;  
Between the bourtrie-bushes and the thorns  
The commonest bird that sings is wonderful.



in which the last line is worth pages of such stuff as:

I behold it dawn.  
An inky cloud with thick, corrosive stench  
Blots out the heavens, and like a palimpsest,  
Shows name on name in smoking characters,  
A leprous scroll, too filthy to o'er-read.

Only, that last line is lyric, not dramatic. Again, when Smith makes love to Magdalene, he goes at it in this fashion:

Think my thought; be impatient as I am;  
Obey your nature, not authority:  
Because the world, enchanted by the sun,  
The moon, the stars, with charms of time and space,  
Of seasons, tides, of darkness and of light,  
Weaves new enchantments everlastingly,  
Whirled in a double spell of day and year,  
A self-deluded sorcerer, winding round,  
Close to its smothered heart, coil after coil  
Of magic zones, invisible as air—

This is surely an extraordinary wooing-speech, and it is so because to Davidson propaganda is so much more important than poetry that he shoves his character off the stage and walks on in his own person!

Davidson's prose has the same queer impatience as his dramas. Indeed, it may be said that he reminds us most of a poet when he is writing prose; and I am afraid, too, that he makes us think of prose again and again when he is writing poetry. His novels have a wild exuberance, an irrepressible poetic gaiety, slightly artificial, slightly satanic: they are the queerest novels between Peacock and Chesterton. Yet they suffer from Davidson's characteristic defect. They are not, for instance, controlled by a satiric (and therefore rational) spirit like Peacock's extraordinary confections; nor, on the other hand, do they possess that insolent and magnificent individuality which serves for genius in the case of Borrow. His better stories start from some overwhelming absurdity suddenly conceived; this absurdity is carried on for a while with comic solemnity, as in "Earl Lavendar," but it is not sustained. About the middle of the book something which Davidson mistook for the Art of Fiction steps in; and what began like "Alice in Wonderland" ends with lost earls and satanic young men, like a concoction by Marie Corelli.

Once only, in "Alison Hepburn's Exploit," a bit of Scots realism that deserves to be exhumed and remembered, did Davidson carry his idea completely through. For the rest, he misses being a fictionist of talent by the narrowest of margins. There are eccentrics in "Earl Lavendar" quite as drolly conceived as anything in Dickens, but Davidson wearies of them and lays them aside in annoyance. There are situations in "Perfervid" and "Baptist Lake" quite as good as anything in Stevenson, but "Perfervid" is the most broken-backed of tales, and "Baptist Lake" manages to miss everything it attempts. The trouble is that Davidson thought of novel-writing as a sin (read that illuminating trifle, "A Would-Be Londoner," ghastly in its frivolity); and since it was too late in the world's history to think of it as a sin against the Holy Ghost, he created a quite imaginary sin by turning Science into a god, and Art into the devil, and perpetually vibrating between them. His literary criticism is violent and heady too.

This exuberant impatience would be Elizabethan were it not something else. Davidson is not of the Renaissance. He is rather the last grim protest of the Victorians against the ballades and blue china

of the decadence. He is a sort of rear guard at Corunna. His poems go off like

the distant and random gun  
That the foe was sullenly firing.

If this idea seem strange, let us remember that nothing is more characteristic of the Victorians than their anti-Victorianism. Nine-tenths of them were in revolt; and when Davidson flays Tennyson and Browning he does it precisely in the spirit of Swinburne and Rossetti:

Tennyson with his confections of passions for use in ladies' seminaries, and Browning with his frantic, terrified optimism, and the restless, over-hasty spinning-jenny in his head, are not much to my liking.

Davidson's moral earnestness, his utilitarian conception of art, are out of Little Nell and Ruskin and the much maligned Tennyson. One traces this quality everywhere. He thought of science, moreover, as the Victorians did, as something which held the first revelations of the future, when, as a matter of fact, his kind of science contained only the last secrets of the past. The excited quality of his testaments is the angry belief of Huxley that there is no God and Darwin is his prophet. Davidson writes British eclogues as Tennyson wrote English idylls; and he shares the genial delusion of Browning that you can turn anything into poetry provided you are recondite enough in handling it. Above all he is like Carlyle.

"Why does a dandelion," asks Chesterton, "have to fight the universe?" Davidson was unable to answer this question, so he destroyed the universe and created it again, as he said, in his own image. Unfortunately, Carlyle had done all this before him. Carlyle destroyed the universe by reducing matter to an illusion; Davidson simply reversed the process and denied it mind. His verse, like Carlyle's prose, suggests an orgy of destruction. Both were Scotsmen, and both shared the masculine energy of the Scots mind, its fierce dislikes, its ebullient humours, and both were bitten by the same wild instinct for reform, the conviction that the world is on the brink of going to Hell, and only an excitable style can save it.

The core of the matter is moral belief. That is why Davidson is an atheist, and why Carlyle is a Presbyterian. It is because Scotsmen get angry about theology in Dumfriesshire (if they still do), that Davidson grew angry about God in London. He writes:

When a Scotsman finds himself at cross-purposes with life, what course does he follow? . . . He either sits down and drinks deeply, thoughtfully, systematically, of the amber spirit of his country, or he reads philosophy.

It would have been better for Davidson as a poet, to have chosen the healthier intoxication, but he selected philosophy instead. Like Jeremiah he grew sorrowful and angry, but unlike Jeremiah, he uttered a vehement call to repent because the kingdom of Antichrist was at hand. When "few listened, and none heard," he grew angrier still, he became uncontrollable—the whirling dervish of British poetry—and this wild vehemence is dominant in his verses.

It is significant that "Thirty Bob a Week" is the type of poem which the grim Carlyle, preaching his gospel of renunciation, would presumably have approved. It goes with the ballads, and Davidson's better ballads are not content, like Rossetti's, to remain highly decorative tapestries; they must solve moral problems, and those of an extreme



order. In "A Ballad of Hell" two lovers fail to keep their death-pact, and Hell must be turned topsy-turvy before the story is ended. In "A Ballad of Heaven" a musician starves his family and himself; and the poet must take the Lord off His throne and disturb the pleasures of the blessed before the problem is solved. A son is temperamentally antagonistic to his father ("A Ballad in Blank Verse") and the drama can play out only after Davidson has reshaped the universe. He brings in The Wandering Jew, in another story, to teach a discontented workman that "only obedience can be great." One is reminded of Milton demanding that the law of the land be altered because he can not live with his wife.

The secret is out. This atheist, this materialist, this Nietzschean is really a puritan who tries, like all puritans, to conceal the fact. Like them he produces beauty by a kind of horrified accident. When Davidson writes:

Sometimes it was a wandering wind,  
Sometimes the fragrance of the pine,  
Sometimes the thought how others sinned  
That turned her sweet blood into wine,

he turns from his work in terror and rushes, so to speak, into the moral safety of

I'm going alone,  
Though Hell forfend,  
By a way of my own  
To the bitter end.

Every man, says the lawyer in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," ought to be allowed to go to Hell in his own way, and that book is the creation of another Scotsman. Out of such strong individuality there arises in Davidson a perpetual antinomy. He is a puritan, and he denies his birthright as a poet. He is a materialist, and he denies his inheritance as an imaginative artist. If, like Richard, he is not shaped for sportive tricks, he is determined to prove—a Nietzschean. He will not, however, "tryst with the sensualist," and despairing of Francis Thompson's God, he takes refuge in the denial of all that he can not touch or feel. The protestant in him drives him to declare:

The rainbow reaches Asgard now no more;  
Olympus stands untenanted; the dead  
Have their serene abode in earth itself,  
Our womb, our nurture, and our sepulture.

But the austerity of his honesty compels him to cry out:

We are too young to fall to dust,  
And too unsatisfied to die.

For if Davidson was a philosopher and a puritan, we must not forget that he was a poet also.

Davidson was honest enough to grapple with reality and to attempt to transmute it into gold. When we ask, however, how much of this feverish industry shall endure, when we note how piece after piece falls, here and there, into the rhetoric which Davidson so frequently mistook for passion, the answer is not easy, and the result is sad enough at best. Art, which cares little for sociology or metaphysics, exists only to tell us that for a little we are free. We are ready to dance to Davidson's tunes, but alas! he will not always pipe to us. Of all his many volumes, only a few pieces will, I think, be remembered—an eclogue or two, here and there a lyric, most of the ballads, and one or two of the testaments.

The eclogues, interesting though they are, seem to me to have the least chance for eternity. They

suffer from a fatal fluency of rhythm and a monotony of theme, defects that even the pungent salt of particular passages will not, I am afraid, preserve. When the testaments are good, they are very good, but nowhere is Davidson more uneven. Sometimes the crude ore of his scientific beliefs is fused in these poems at white heat, and there result great lines such as these:

we are fire,  
Cut off and cooled awhile; and shall return,  
The earth and all thereon that live and die,  
To be again candescent in the sun,  
Or in the sun's intenser, purer source.

Perhaps the world is incorrigibly fond of storytelling, but I think the reason why the ballads succeed is because in them that very impatience which I find to be the dominant trait in Davidson, is not a vice but something of a virtue. In the ballads the restlessness of the artist's temperament serves to make the story move; and Davidson's sense of the line holds in check the ebullience characteristic of the testaments. Here, too, the metaphysical habit of his thinking lends weight and dignity to the story. Perhaps "A New Ballad of Tannhäuser" illustrates the matter as well as any, in which the old story achieves new meaning, becomes the tale of the artist and his eternal vision—an answer, so to speak, to "To The Dead Cardinal at Westminster," which it so curiously parallels. It is in the ballads, too, that Davidson has said most simply memorable things:

I am sister to the mountains now,  
And sister to the sun and moon,

or

Amazed to find it could rejoice,  
Hell raised a hoarse, half-human cheer,

or even

And we fall, face forward, fighting, on the deck.

Davidson brought to the modern movement the great gift of impatience. Like a figure from mythology he died in bringing it; and though the children of men are notably ungrateful to a minor Prometheus, our modern dissatisfaction with Form goes back, I think, rather definitely to such as he. His muse danced a kind of wild *ga ira* to the French Revolution of the universe.

Hearts of gold and hearts of lead,  
Sing it yet in sun and rain,  
'Heel and toe from dawn to dusk,  
Round the world and home again.'

And yet, like Lucretius, all he sought was peace:

that hour perhaps  
Is not so far when momentary man  
Shall seem no more a something to himself . . .  
O Thou,  
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
Yearned after by the wisest of the wise,  
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
Without one pleasure and without one pain . . .  
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
How roughly men may woo thee, so they win.

Did Davidson, like Tennyson's Lucretius, win to that divine tranquillity in death? One thing we know: he is, like Strindberg, a type of the tragedy of the artist, the tragedy of over cerebration, of that disaster of the nerves with which our hideous civilization seeks to kill its accusers. "He had," says Mr. O'Brien, "the lyrical mind, and it was his misfortune to be a Scotsman." He had likewise the misfortune to be almost a contemporary of ours.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES.



## PHANTOM. XXXVII

THERE was a table there in an alcove at which quantities of champagne were being drunk. There were six persons sitting around it, three gentlemen and three ladies. They were excited and never stopped laughing, you might say. Yet although they were in something more than high spirits, their merriment did not for a long time transgress the bounds of what is customary in any decent place.

I noted that Vigottschinsky was in a certain state of agitation and was interested in one of the ladies at that table, who had her back to us. She was a type, he told me, such as he had only once encountered in a young girl, and that had been a Circassian.

I looked that way and was likewise attracted in an indefinable way by the vision, which I only saw from behind. She had something strong and youth-like about her, one might say something Apollonic. But you found yourself thinking that this girl, perhaps not so long ago, might have been riding half-wild horses without saddle or bridle on the steppes of Asia.

We had eaten such a supper as I had hitherto not even dreamed of. Finally Vigottschinsky ordered champagne, though only a German brand, which I of course had to pay for, as well as for a great sea-crab he had ordered. I must now learn to know all these things, he told me.

Engrossed afresh in crab, champagne, chimeras, and everything else imaginable, I had paid no further attention to the table and girl just mentioned, and hence had not remarked what Vigottschinsky suddenly communicated to me as quietly as possible.

He had kept the girl incessantly in view, and claimed to have observed that she had looked around at me several times, and when I tried with the utmost sincerity to talk him out of it, he swore that it was so, and that I could pride myself on the conquest I had made.

I wanted to speak of other things, but he would not desist, saying that there were even stirrings of jealousy at the table in question.

By this time it was probably an hour after midnight. Fresh arrivals hardly came in any more, or if they did, it was gentlemen whose hats were pushed far back, who talked loudly and uncereemoniously and whose companions did likewise, or at times even shrieked quite discordantly. At the tables in the restaurant, too, there was likewise greater freedom and vivacity now.

On the strength of Vigottschinsky's assertions I could hardly help trying to pick up this and that from the conversation at the champagne-table—only there were hardly any but champagne-tables now! And it was really the fact that the Circassian's beautiful wrists, at first only held in jest, were being tightly held by her elegant escort, to prevent her from looking around. Yet she turned her Apolline head on its proud neck far enough around to look me in the face. Thereupon her partner, the elegant gentleman, was ridiculed by the rest of the table.

A thrill passed through me when she looked at me. But I was so infinitely far from taking any account of an event like this that I gazed quite blankly into the beautiful eyes of the girl; I was indeed smitten by her beauty, wholly strange to me and of a primitive exuberance, but I was still far from taking any further interest in her.

Vigottschinsky and I had studiously continued our conversation. When I looked up after a time, the elegant partner of the Circassian had turned his chair half around towards our table and was staring at me with scornful challenge.

People were already beginning to notice the proceedings.

Now the Circassian tried on her gallant what he had vainly tried on her. But she had as little success in drawing him back into the circle as he had had in restoring her exclusive interest to his companions. Then she hit upon the idea of holding her dainty handkerchief before his eyes. Angrily he thrust it aside and rose from his chair with a quick jerk. I can still see how his handsome face, flushed with wine, grew alarmingly grey.

What happened now, and with the speed of lightning, was so surprising to every one, and to me no less, that I can not recall ever having felt as helpless as I did then.

For before I had made up my mind as to the best way of taking the edge off this most baseless, silly comedy of jealousy, the mad Circassian was suddenly beside me and laughing as she gave me—who had jumped up in alarm—three, four, five, six hearty kisses.

## XXXVIII

It will have been guessed whom I had met in this way and at such a place. It was revealed, in a certain sense, that my sister was still the same wilful and independent girl as before, and that she still had her heart in the right place. However, her mad conduct caused me great embarrassment in the fact that I had met her at all in this quarter. But at any rate our relationship was now cleared up to the satisfaction of her jealous lover, and we, Vigottschinsky and I, were induced to take seats in the alcove with the three couples.

The conversation at their table had all at once grown quite frosty. The spirit of the champagne seemed to have evaporated. The touching reunion of brother and sister made every one thoughtful.

Then too, I must have cut a sorry figure despite my ready-made suit.

And now my sister Melanie, too, had suddenly lost her wild mood, and shrank into her shell in my presence like a schoolgirl. The expression on her face showed embarrassment, almost timidity. My presence seemed for the first time to make her conscious that she had become a *demi-mondaine* of city-wide repute. This fact I was also having to digest.

She wanted to ask after mother, I could see. She wanted to ask me how I had come by this friend and into this resort. She was ashamed of her company and of her lover, she would have done anything to get rid of them.

No one will be surprised that this group was not exactly pleased with the sudden turn of affairs, which it also felt, and that the one who had caused it was surveyed with rather ill-favoured glances.

My situation was certainly of a sort to encourage repentance; and I really had, in this resort and in this circle, as I sat beside my sister, the feeling of being pilloried. I should have liked to steal away unnoticed, or still rather to be herding sheep, perhaps, somewhere in Turkey a thousand miles away. I had the feeling of being leprous, scabious, a pariah, whereas shortly before I had felt as if I were already admitted to full membership in the upper ten thousand. There came upon me, perhaps for the first time in my life, a fury against the class whose sons were brought up with horses and servants, governesses and mistresses, French cookery and costly wines, and could buy with money the body of my sister.

I must have appeared not quite kosher to those around me. I felt dangerous forces rising in me. It was as if my shame were turning every minute more and more into bitterness and silent rage. There was a danger, and it was recognized by my sister, that some sort of kindling spark might fall into my soul and cause an explosion.

My sister recognized too late that it would have been better for her and for me not to have made herself known to me. I told myself, to be sure, that I must make every effort to keep my feelings in check, but I could not prevail upon myself to accept from the lover who was paying her the glass of champagne that he handed to me. Nor could I avoid turning pale in the act, and failing to evade his glance as I had previously done during his fit of jealousy.

Strangely enough, I was also ashamed of Vigottschinsky. I found it natural, and yet it vexed me, that they all edged away from him, as it were, with their looks. The three gentlemen might have been barristers, lieutenants in mufti or something similar. They had waxed mustaches and wore their hair parted in the middle.

Although I had to gulp down a tangle of emotions and thus had enough to do to look after myself, yet I saw that Vigottschinsky was greatly taken aback at the turn of affairs with his Circassian; and I noted that he sought my sister's eye. It flashed through my mind at once that



if this went on it might very well give rise to a fresh complication of jealousy. Not long after, however, I also intercepted a strangely searching glance which my sister was directing at Vigottschinsky.

I had been through not a little on this Sunday. My nerves had been played upon violently and unbrokenly, like so many strings, beginning at the encounter with Veronica Harlan and her greyhound, through all the planning and resolving to the oath of friendship, and in the wandering from beer-hall to beer-hall, from wine-room to wine-room. The meeting with my sister had almost snapped them all in twain. But now the entire instrument threatened to go to pieces at the slightest additional touch.

### XXXIX

Suffice it to say that the danger of a conflict which lay in the tense and sultry atmosphere of that evening was not avoided. I should be reluctant to enter into the description of ugly details. I have spent a beautiful autumn forenoon in my orchard and garden, have shaken my plum tree, and performed all sorts of quiet rustic tasks. How far I am now from the repulsive entanglements of that time, which wound about my feet like hellish brambles because I had my eyes not on the earth, but directed to a divine and distant star. But I will continue my report nevertheless.

All the next day I lay a-bed with a terribly seedy feeling. My deeply dejected, in truth inconsolable mother nursed me in silence and with a face that seemed to me, when I secretly observed it, to be turned to stone.

Not only because of the shooting pains in my head, which were due to the liquors I had drunk, did she make cold compresses for me, but also because I had a bruise over my left eye.

It resulted from a nocturnal brawl in front of the Vincent House, and in particular was due to a cowardly and underhanded blow from the fist of my sister's lover.

With that obstinate tenacity which is at times characteristic of the drunken, I tried to induce my sister not to go with her gallant, but to go with me to our mother's. For this I was called by the elegant blackguard the most disgusting names, which would have been appropriate if I had played a part diametrically opposite to my present one, i.e., had accepted money for bringing my sister to him. I was walking along before him in silence with Vigottschinsky, when he suddenly dealt me from behind a tremendous blow on the cheek with the palm of his right hand: that was the beginning of the fight. I am not strong, but I know that the next minute, strangely enough, the villainous, cowardly scoundrel was lying on his back, and that I was kneeling on him with my hands at his throat. As I could not do this indefinitely, and also did not wish to throttle him, I declared myself ready to let him go, on his word of honour that he would keep the peace. This word of honour he solemnly gave me before the whole group, which was still together. Nevertheless, at the very moment when I took my hands away he drove his fist into my face, bellowing, "You damned cur!"

It is a wonder that I did not lose my eye.

### XL

I see that I have gone into details again after all. Let them stand, although they are without significance for the whole story. It can not be helped that if you occupy yourself with a matter in any way at all, it will to a certain extent get the mastery over you.

After a relatively short time I had recovered and could pursue the realization of our plans with Vigottschinsky.

My mother had not succeeded in getting out of me what had really taken place the day before, and how I had got into my terrible condition. Nor did she subsequently succeed in wheedling out of me anything about my secret love, or about my business plans. Vigottschinsky called on me while I was in bed. My mother said she felt a horror of him, and I could see that she was not simply talking.

I calmed her and assured her that she would one day realize what a lucky chance it was for us that I had found this man. He and I debated for a long time over the manner in which we should wrest from Aunt Schwab

the working-capital we required; but concerning this matter also I left mother completely in the dark.

It may be asked whether the adventure with my sister must not have led to my conversion, whether the blow at my eye must not have waked me out of my terrible dream-life. That was not the case. The condition which I had experienced, and into which I had been cast during the aftermath of my debauch, was really only an intensification of the suffering I had had to endure every day and every hour since my first sight of little Veronica, in being deprived of her, banished from her presence. Unless I could cherish and foster at least a hope of one day possessing her, life had become a hell to me in any case. Since this hope, which alone kept me alive, could not be nourished by reality—and it certainly could not—it had to go on twining itself about illusions.

Certainly I showed myself a stranger to the world, provincial and without judgment, in finding it possible to believe that a poor municipal clerk, whose sister was a woman of the streets, even if he did secure some little fortune, could have had any success in his suit for the hand of the only daughter of wealthy and respected people; and to that extent my madness did have a very real and very natural foundation.

GERHART HAUPTMANN.

(Translated by Bayard Quincy Morgan.)

(To be continued.)

### LETTERS FROM A COUSIN: XIII.

LONDON. September, 1922.

FATE is really very kind to me in the way of supplying just such contrasts as bring out the humour of any and every situation. I have just returned from a vegetable fortnight in France, staying with a distinguished writer who, for the time being, forgot literature in favour of mushroom-gathering, which provides me with a charming story to be told hereafter when I have indulged in my usual cheerfully insulting analysis of the European muddle.

During the last few days, since the expulsion of the Greeks from Smyrna, there has been the gorgeous spectacle in Whitehall of the war-swollen heads really believing that the brave old days had come again; maps out, wires humming, the Colonies listening in—and nobody paying any attention whatsoever. Back to the old incredible, blind, unthinking, imperious—or shall we say imperial?—gestures, which were impressive enough when the real governor of these islands was Panic. But Kemal is a long way off and the Turk was easily the most popular of our late enemies, and the popular instinct recognizes these frantic manoeuvres as a smoke cloud to disguise the very welcome fact that Mr. Lloyd George has been kicked out of Europe which is no longer content or able to pay the price of his Premiership. The vacuum created by his egoism has collapsed and everywhere the business men are rushing into one another's arms. As business men it is their business to do business and they can no longer wait for the monopolies promised them by the politicians. Mr. Urquhart embraces M. Krassin, Herr Stinnes embraces M. Lubersac and presently business men everywhere will be dining as they never dined before. Good luck to them! They are probably the only people who can resist squandering large sums of money. They like their job of shifting goods from one part of the earth to another and are not at all concerned with human beings or what they make of their lives, and if there is one thing more than another that they dislike and distrust it is swelled head; but what could they do, what could anybody do with such a swelled head as Lloyd George's? The peace-conference was turned into a competition to determine who should be the greatest man in the world, and Lloyd George won, hands down, and having won, thought that everything was settled for ever and ever since his name would go down the ages and whenever there was any trouble the sufferer would only have to say: "Lloyd George is the greatest man in the world," and hey-presto! trouble would vanish, there would be smiles all round, happiness, contentment, and—er—peace. Not



so much a genius as a genie of a man, and henceforth the human race would have only, like Aladdin, to polish the lamp of Lloyd George's reputation to procure everything it desired. The amazing thing is that while the war-hypnosis lasted this was accepted as practical politics, and statesmen, journalists, business men and even authors assiduously polished Mr. Lloyd George's reputation and believed, really believed, that something was happening. But nothing, nothing at all was happening: the dividends of the Great Reputation were being paid out of capital until at last there is nothing left.

The amazing thing is that it has lasted so long. In finance such a swindle lasts just about a year and to get out of it you have to think of a new one, and I suppose the effort to blow the Kemalist success out to the dimensions of a new world-war is such an attempt, if it is not a mere electioneering dodge to disguise the imperial humiliation. Anyhow there never was such fun as this spectacle of Little Winston and Little Beatty and the other giants dwindled into dwarfs gathering solemnly at Downing Street and with extraordinary precision, doing and saying the wrong thing. If the world doesn't laugh itself ill I shall give up human beings and take to mushrooms: not in any haste, however, for I have learned patience. I began to laugh two years ago in Africa and have been laughing ever since, because I saw then what an immense service Lloyd George had done to the human race in gathering up all its folly into his own head. What a liberation when it bursts! And what a relief to the little man when he can spend the rest of his days in the memory of the time when he was "Great" and young men were dead or gagged and the world did really seem to stop upon his Mosaic utterance!

The prospect pleases to the extent of fascination. The Turk's morals may be queer but his manners are good, and as the mob recoils from its triumphs turned to mocking disaster it is manners that count more than anything, so much so that when I was asked what I thought this country needed I said: "For the next ten years good looks and good manners." "But," said my interlocutor, "the millionaires have neither." "They must buy them then," said I, and I think they will, for without charm and intelligence life is both intolerable and unworkable. Money and guns are both impotent in a crisis and as the politicians' knots are untied we shall be faced with a crisis about once a week, and the only measure of progress we shall have will be the degree to which charm and intelligence are liberated—watch the theatres, dear cousin, and literature and the cinema, and the magazines like *Vanity Fair* which have so far made the mistake of thinking that you must be bizarre to be amusing. I think the young people everywhere have latent unlimited charm and intelligence. The old people have developed a horrible skill in exploiting everything that is degraded in human nature, and I think they are going to be forced, against the grain, to apply that skill to the qualities of the young, who are bound, if only out of reaction, to insist on a certain measure of decency in life. I think them better even than that: I think they are already beyond reactions, but that remains to be seen. I may be over sanguine as I emerge from my troglodytic job of digging foundations, and breathe the air, which seems to me sweet with youth and eager confidence.

This may be my last letter before I come over to shake hands and talk and laugh, and I must tell you the story of the mushrooms. It is a good story because it has more charm than point and leads into the elfin world where I can be happy. My distinguished host is one of those blessed writers, few and rare, who know what not being distinguished is. He likes words as he likes wine, to roll them round his tongue and savour them. He also likes mushrooms and led me out in quest of them—*de vrais champignons* and also *des parapluies*. Now I am one of those absorbed, concentrated persons who are generally assumed to be incompetent and it was annoying and distressing to my host that I found mushrooms by the handful when he picked only one or two. So he grew gloomy and puzzled as we plunged deeper into the woods. I became (to let you into the secret) enough of a mushroom to

know at once the kind of place a mushroom likes and went on triumphant until wild shrieks rent the air and rang through the forest of Fontainebleau. I was busy and could not move and the shrieks grew louder until I ran at last to find my host staring, staring in an enchantment. Shades of Grimm! There was a little red-tiled hovel, there was a mossy bank, there was my host transformed into an excited troll, for in front of the little hovel were six, seven, eight, nine enormous *parapluies*—an armful of mushrooms!

That is all there is of the story but it contains a very profound experience: all charm and intelligence and good manners breaking into the smile which is fairyland. I could have lied like a magazine-writer and filled the hovel with Snow-white and the Seven Little Men, but there were only mushrooms, nothing but mushrooms, and the trees, and the green light swimming through their green, and my friend and myself. Enough, surely!

I returned from that to the silliest of all the silly crises invented by the politicians to show us that they really are doing something with our money.

GILBERT CANNAN.

## MISCELLANY.

A FRIEND just back from Moscow says that the new Russian regime is a fixture, thus confirming the appearance of increasing stability reported in the press. Russia, he says, is in a position to profit immensely by the rivalry of French and English interests, and things there are rapidly looking up in all ways. This brought Jack Reed to my mind; after all, he did not die in vain, but will be henceforth to the Russians a sort of uncommissioned Lafayette, and will be regarded with even greater tenderness as having given his life for the cause of freedom at a time when its prospects were blackest. It is a good fate, no doubt; but I wish he might have lived at a quieter time, for his gifts were essentially those of a poet, and it is as a poet that even now I prefer to remember him. Not many of our versifiers can speak with the tone and accent of true lyric poetry as he did, for example, in his lines to an absent fiancée:

You there—I here.  
Not all the brightness of your face,  
Nor joy of your fair company,  
Can bring us to one place.

I do not think that Herrick or Lovelace would be dissatisfied with those lines, or that the Earl of Rochester or Sir Charles Sedley would be ashamed of them.

BRESHKOVSKAIA, Berkman, Emma Goldman! how many striking examples we have lately been getting of the saddest fate that can overtake a revolutionist or reformer! Not to be able to recognize a revolution that does not work out *your way*—it seems to me that nothing is more lamentable than this, and nothing more common. The *divom pater atque hominum rex* in his exuberant humour, plays merry tricks with the doctrinaire. As soon as poor Mr. Wilson got well fixed in his mind the Cromwellian notion that God's purposes really could not get on without him, the ground opened beneath his feet. The Russian revolution did not quite go Breshkovskaia's way or Berkman's or Emma Goldman's way; so they beat their heads manfully against it to turn it into the true path. For that matter, it did not quite go Marx's way either; and unless he has limbered up his Teutonic inflexibility in the large atmosphere of the Elysian fields, his very whiskers, no doubt, have stiffened into implacable resistance.

"THEN, ha! then, and no sooner than then or otherwise than thus, shall the world be happy." Thus did Homenas, bishop of the island of Papimany, perorate in his description of a world made perfect through study of the sacrosanct decretals. How well the arch-humanist Rabelais (if Mr. Sumner will allow me to mention him) knows the doctrinaire tendencies of mankind! Some of us put our millennial expectations upon socialism, some on "control of credit," some on the single tax, some on proportional representation, some, like Mr. Wilson and the editor of



the New York *World*, upon the League of Nations; and unless we be saved from it by a most extraordinary grace of humour, we tout our nostrums as magisterially as Homenas. The world must not, can not, neglect so great salvation! "Then, ha! then, and no sooner than then or otherwise than thus, shall the world be happy." But yet suppose in spite of all our certitude, it somehow should? Where would we be found—with the inflexible doctrinaires, the Breshkovskais, Goldmans, Marxes, or with Edmund Burke, whose marvellous return upon himself in respect of the French revolution, which he had hated and fought with all his power, marks him as one of the truly great men of the world?

PROBABLY the best way to keep one's feet is by trust in the power of the Idea, and by not paying much attention to the ways and means of its development. The French Revolution liberated an idea; what did it matter, really, that its practical development was botched a little here, distorted a bit there? It lived; nothing could kill it, neither the fanaticism of its friends nor the violence of its enemies. In its own way and time, it prevailed; and now it is a commonplace. The Russian revolution liberated an idea; what of it if it makes its way by roundabout paths, if a handful of bureaucrats dishonour it, or a few grafting commissars misuse it, or here and there some poor pettifogger like Mr. Hughes be found to oppose it? It will prevail, for the forces of nature are on its side. Men think that they live by programmes and policies, by action and organization, but what they really live by is the Idea. The Idea only is enduring and invincible, and laying out methods for its development is at best an uncertain business, for who can tell what course that development will actually take? The Kingdom of God, said the most eminent authority in such matters, "is as if a man should cast seed in the ground, and sleep and rise night and day, and the seed springeth and groweth up, *he knoweth not how*." Moreover, for the benefit of the doctrinaire tendency, apparently, he put a little extra emphasis on this point by adding, "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself," or perhaps better, "of her own motion"—pretty nearly as we would say in the vernacular, "on her own hook." The Greek word is *automatè*.

BOARDMAN ROBINSON, the artist, has sailed for England to draw cartoons for the London *Outlook*, and I am thereby moved to remark upon the extraordinary incuriousness of our people in matters of graphic art, as I have heretofore remarked it in matters of music and literature. Boardman Robinson, a really great cartoonist, a true artist in the cartoon, as truly such as ever were Leech and Tenniel, has been lying about for years, little known and unappreciated. Even the *Baltimore Sun*, for which he drew a few cartoons during the Washington conference, did not have sense enough to keep him and wrap him in eiderdown. He put on a private exhibition last spring, and sold a few pictures, but got little notice. Somehow his work, or some reproduction of it, found its way across the ocean; and as soon as it was seen in England, Sir Charles Ross came over to New York hot-foot, dug up Boardman Robinson by the roots and transplanted him in England in almost as little time as it takes to tell it.

I do not complain of a popular incuriousness; that is to be expected. As Abe Potash paraphrased the proverb, "It's an old saying but a true one, 'There's no profit for a feller in his own country.'" But I wonder a little at the incuriousness of persons who are under what amounts almost to a professional obligation not to be incurious. Musicians have complained of this for years, with cause; and so have painters and sculptors. I notice the same thing in literature, and in that connexion I have also had occasion to remark, if the editors will permit me to say so, how well the *Freeman* has served as a touchstone for the alertness of those who most lament the decadence of American literature. I recall offhand two or three writers who publish pretty regularly in the *Freeman*, who, if they had appeared, say, in the *Mercure de France*, would by

this time have attracted the interested professional attention not only of current reviewers but of technical specialists with a literary turn, of whom France has such an abundance, and England too. Yet nothing of the sort has happened.

JOURNEYMAN.

## POETRY.

### SINGING COTSWOLD TOWNS.

Straight as Destiny the road  
The Romans marched along  
Marches under larks and clouds,  
Turns not for rose or song.

Left and right the lanes go down  
Idled on by bees  
Into singing Cotswold towns  
Sleepy with great trees.

Norman towers keep old faith  
And tell with drowsy bells  
The moving sunbeams of the years  
Where contentment dwells.

"Gaffer Blythe's asleep at last,  
Lucy Wynn's a bride!"  
So they gossip each to each  
Through the country-side.

Ducks upon the village pond,  
Dimpled boys of five  
Play the game as it was played  
When churchyard folks were alive.

Men with manhood in their eyes  
The wide, wide world have seen  
And drunk the deepest draughts of life  
Upon their village green.

They have not gone a dozen miles  
To win a love true-blue;  
Creation's smiled in baby eyes  
Beside the crops they grew.

And Death will leave them by the hedg:  
Where their own bees hum  
In their cabbage-patch to find  
Golden Kingdom Come.

Thundering years go down the road  
The Legions thundered down;  
But never find the winding way  
To any Cotswold town.

Milton-under-green-Wychwood,  
Stow-upon-the-Wold  
Keep their youth and loveliness  
While the world grows old.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN.

## THE THEATRE.

### TWO RECENT EXPERIMENTS.

If a translated poem is a boiled strawberry, a translated play may sometimes be something equally pale and tasteless. The instinct of the old time "commercial" manager to adapt foreign plays, so much deplored by the critics, was not infrequently a sound instinct. For, if what makes a play worth while can not be carried over in a translation, there is nothing to do but adapt it. Fancy the difficulty of translating George Ade's "College Widow" into French! and is it inconceivable that there are French plays equally impossible of translation into English? If a foreign play can not be adequately translated, and if it is yet deemed an act of vandalism to present it other than in strict translation, why not leave it in the decent obscurity of Paris or Berlin or Madrid?

When the newly-formed Equity Players, starting off the first season in co-operative management of a theatre by actors, produced the Spanish drama,



"Malvaloca," by the brothers Quintero, they did not sufficiently consider this theme. "Malvaloca" was first produced in Madrid in 1912, and became somewhat famous in Spain. But the qualities which entitled it to critical respect are among the very ones which evaporate in translation. The story, or fable, is slight, trite and without the elements of suspense. There is no profound appeal to the emotions. There is no romantic glamour. Indeed, the translation gives one the impression that the authors were deliberately careless about supplying these more universal elements of drama; what they seemed to be trying to do, rather, was to focus attention on the surface-texture of their play, as if they sought to convince the Spanish public that a quiet, faithful, almost lazily gentle and discursive picture of the local life could be good entertainment, as good as intrigue, or "blood and sand."

One gathers that they have persuaded the Spanish public of this fact, and consequently "Malvaloca" is an important drama—in Spain; but it means astonishingly little in America. We, in America (saving, of course, John Dos Passos!) know very little about life in Andalusia, and knowing nothing, we are unable to estimate the accuracy of the picture. Realism carries no thrill to those who can not estimate its approximation to reality. Moreover, dramatic accuracy is so largely a matter of idiom, must be so largely achieved by a rich control of the nuances of language, that it baffles translation. "The Bat" can be translated into any language, including the Scandinavian. Ring Lardner's base-ball skit in "The Follies" can not even be translated into English. Neither can "Malvaloca," and retain much of anything that apparently made it significant in Spain. If the Equity Players had reflected a bit more carefully, they would have been able to predict this. As it is, they have begun their first season badly, with what seems a dull and unimportant play, totally without validity to Americans; which is a pity, because the Equity Theatre is one of the most important and hopeful experiments our stage has ever made.

It must, in fairness, be added, too, that the performance of the play fell below even the existing possibilities. Miss Jane Cowl, in the title part, was excellent—warm, human, lively, colourful, and astonishingly adept in making translated speeches sound natural. But, with one or two other exceptions, the acting was drab and inefficient, which should certainly not be the case in a theatre conducted by the great organization of American players, the Actors Equity. Furthermore, the play was acted at a painfully slow pace, it was "held down," suppressed, dragged out, till what the Spanish critics describe as a play saturated with Andalusian sunshine became as lugubrious as a New England prayer-meeting on a rainy day. This will never do. Dullness is the unforgivable sin, whether it be committed by a "commercial" manager or by idealistic actors in the name of Co-operation and Art.

Up on West Sixty-third Street, near Central Park, there is a new, barn-like, chilly, grey theatre, which last season became popular because it housed the Negro players in "Shuffle Along." The managers have now, it appears, decided to put this theatre into aristocratic theatrical society, to associate it with our old families, for they have rechristened it Daly's Theatre, and opened it for the new season with a romantic play by B. Iden Payne, based on the life of Dolly Jordan.

Daly's Theatre! It was not a beautiful theatre, but it was a warm, intimate, richly-toned theatre. It had what so few modern New York playhouses possess, a foyer, where, between the acts, men and women could move about and chat without having to resort to the cigarette smoke and icy drafts of the outer lobby. A Sargent portrait of Ada Rehan dominated this foyer. Up the stairs marched a row of theatrical scenes and portraits, done in mezzotint. Everywhere in the house, in fact, were the evidences of taste, of tradition, of long devotion to the arts of the theatre.

If one reads G. B. Shaw's criticisms of the Daly productions, carried to England in the 'nineties, one will get the impression that they were rather terrible affairs. That is because Shaw, in the 'nineties, was fighting for a different kind of play, a wholly different attitude towards the theatre, in fact. They represented the past, tradition; and Shaw was militantly set towards the future. But the future that Shaw was fighting for has come, and there are not lacking those who say that it is already going again. Realism and social criticism on the stage have already demonstrated, say the new critics, their insufficiency to satisfy the playgoers' needs. The "new stagecraft" works towards a revival of "theatricalism," towards the peculiar release of the human spirit which comes in the theatre at, let us say, a stirring performance of "Hamlet," or a colourful spectacle, or a blaze of the elemental passions. Something of this "theatricalism" was inherent in the older acting, and in the plays Daly used to revive and in his methods of production.

Well, at the new "Daly's" an evident attempt was lately made, to re-create the traditional romantic drama. Mr. Payne, who in times past has been a worker in the vineyard of realism, has written a romantic comedy in eight scenes, about the famous Dolly Jordan, to the shapeliness of whose limbs and the charm of whose comedy all the patrons of old Drury testified, and to the charm of whose domestic society there was ample evidence also, furnished for at least twenty years by H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence. Mr. Payne evidently believes in the economic interpretation of history, for each step in Dolly's career, according to his play, was prompted by economic necessity. He left that lively lady not a single spontaneous amatory impulse. This, doubtless, was done to whitewash her, to make her more "sympathetic," and not in the cause of realism. Whether the desired result was achieved is another matter. The real point is, rather, that however he chose to interpret the fair but frail one's history, he needed a quite different set of players to give it stage life.

One can give the name Daly's arbitrarily to a new collection of brick and plaster. But one can not arbitrarily bring back the art of Daly's players—and they had an art, whether Mr. Shaw liked it or not. Ada Rehan, John Drew, Mrs. Gilbert, James Lewis, and the rest, were totally different beings in the romantic posturings of "costume drama" from the players at Daly's Theatre of 1922. Just what this difference was, and why it was, is too long a story for us now; but if one watch Otis Skinner, for example, in a romantic rôle, or John Drew in any rôle at all, one may still get some idea of it. Mr. Drew, especially, has kept abreast of the times, and his acting has never seemed "old-fashioned." But it has never lost the grace, the ease, the crisp fluency, the natural artificiality—if we may so put it—of the older style. Ada Rehan, in the breeches of Dolly Jordan, would have strutted through a scene as triumphantly and as easily as Melba



would toss off a florid aria, and that would be, doubtless, exactly the way Dolly Jordan played it. But Miss Josephine Victor, acting at Daly's in 1922, had no sense of this style, this manner, and neither had her supporting company. From their vocal insufficiency to their clumsy lack of bodily grace, they were remarkably inadequate to the task of bringing back the romantic glamour of a bygone day, and clothing the artificial with the illusive robes of temporary reality. Dolly Jordan is dead; and Dolly Jordan was more than a person, she was a tradition, a style.

The "new stagecraft," of course, will hardly amount to much if it attempts to go forward by going backward. It will have to create a new romantic drama, and a new type of acting therefor. Yet not entirely new, either, because a production such as this one shows again how much there was of eternal value in the older style—plastic grace, vocal power and flexibility, the sense of rhythm and sustained line. Each time that the actor of to-day gets out of a realistic photograph and into a picture of even the slightest imaginative suggestiveness, his shortcomings in these respects are woefully apparent.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

### RULER OF WIND AND WAVE.

SIRS: "The net result of the Washington conference," say you, "is precisely nothing." Not so. The net result is that America has lost the only chance she ever had of ending the age-long British sea-tyranny. In England's next war, as in the past, the ocean highways of the world will be open to her friends and shut to her enemies, or to neutrals who refuse to serve her alone. The disquieting rat-a-tat-tat of the pneumatic hammers in the American ship-yards has been stilled.

Be assured that this is well appreciated in London. Not for nothing were high honours showered upon Balfour. Hadn't he knocked the Yankee building-programme into a cocked hat? Didn't Britannia, in spite of her post-war poverty and of Jonathan's ill-gotten wealth, still rule the waves? Well, rather. I am, etc.,

Brooklyn, New York.

JAMES C. HICKEY.

### ATROCITIES—WITH A DIFFERENCE.

SIRS: In your issue of 27 September, Mr. B. P. Salmon quotes the sources from which he drew his information about the atrociousness of the Turks. As was to be expected, these were tainted sources—politicians and diplomats from countries at war with Turkey. He also quotes again Major Yowell and Dr. Ward, although the reports of these men have been branded as falsehoods by their own American co-workers, as was stated in the letter which started this controversy.

It is curious that people should cling with such tenacity to their hatred of certain nations and take such pleasure in making them out perfect paragons of viciousness. Perhaps this is a subconscious process. The blacker they paint their "enemy," the more justified they feel in continuing to indulge in the luxury of hatred, and the more virtuous will their own nation seem in comparison.

As far as the Turko-Greek relations are concerned, I should like to quote from a report by the inter-Allied Commission composed of the British General Franks with his Aides-de-Camp Captain Stone, Colonel Vicq of France, and Colonel Roletto of Italy, with their interpreters speaking Turkish and Greek.

"The Commission has reached the conclusion that elements of the Greek Army of Occupation were executing a systematic extermination of the Moslem population in the peninsula of Samanli, for the last two months. The investigations carried on by the Commission concerning the burning of villages, massacres, and terrorizing of inhabitants, furnished indisputable proof."

Another inter-Allied Commission composed of delegates of the three High Commissions, which visited other parts of the occupied territory, and the International Red Cross, sent reports of the same tenor.

No sensible person would try to prove that the Turks are innocent and blameless as babes. All nations will commit

atrocities when the occasion presents itself. The only difference is that some commit them in self-defence or for revenge, while others do so for the cultural salvation of their victims, or to make the world safe for democracy. I am, etc.,

HELEN WOLJESKA.

New York City.

### WHERE SENILITY SETS IN.

SIRS: It is surprising that Mr. McMix in his letter in the *Freeman* of 13 September should propose disfranchisement after sixty on the ground that those who have reached that age have reached the limit of intelligent voting. We have senility at a much earlier age than sixty if intelligence in casting a vote be the measure by which it is determined. Mr. McMix should know that voting is not considered by the masses as a thing designed to establish an intellectual status. It is the mind which is incapable of grasping the fundamental concepts of life that we in most instances choose to make our laws, and it makes no difference whether that mind be housed in the brain of a man of thirty or one of sixty; it means that ossification has begun. I am, etc.,

Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania.

H. N. BARTLETT.

### FOR A RUSSIAN HOSPITAL.

SIRS: During the past year, the American Medical Aid for Russia, organized under the direction of a group of distinguished American physicians, raised a fund sufficient to purchase hospital equipment adequate for a first-class institution. The following have been bought and are being shipped to Russia as rapidly as possible: equipment for an operating-room; laboratory equipment for clinical, pathological, and bacteriological work; X-ray equipment; supplies for a drugstore; disinfecting apparatus; complete equipment for bakery, kitchen and laundry; ambulance and 500 beds fully equipped. The Society has sent to Russia in equipment and donations in kind approximately \$60,000.

Under an agreement formulated between the Moscow health-authorities and the Society, the Old Catherine Hospital in Moscow is being put in first-class repair by the Soviet authorities and placed in charge of the American Medical Aid for a period of one year. Having already equipped the hospital as described, the Society agrees to provision both patients and staff; meet all the running expenses of the institution; supply it with an abundance of first-class material; install American methods of administration, nursing and treatment; and in general maintain the institution as a modern hospital of the highest standard. At the end of one year, it will be returned to the Soviet Health Commission of Moscow as the model hospital of the city.

For this great work, the sum of \$200,000 is promptly needed. Individual contributions are solicited, and may be sent to the American Medical Aid for Russia, 103 Park Avenue, New York. I am, etc.,

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

New York City.

### A MISPLACED WAR-SONG.

SIRS: I regret having to disagree with the statement which your correspondent Mr. Adamantios Th. Polyzoides makes at the beginning of his letter in your issue of 11 October, as to what forced the British Government of the day to make war on Russia in 1854.

I am unfortunately old enough to have a very vivid recollection of the events of that time, having, before I had reached the age of nineteen, entered the British army and sailed out of Portsmouth on Guy Fawkes Day, 1855, with a draft for my regiment that had been badly cut up in the two assaults preceding the capture of Sebastopol. *En passant*, I may mention that as the transport entered the harbour at Malta, we met a large steamer, the "City of Washington," flying the Star Spangled Banner and bound for the Black Sea with her deck swarming with French soldiers and the band playing the imperial anthem of France, "Partant pour la Syrie," by which there hangs a tale, the end of which has not yet been reached.

To return to my subject. The ballad, the refrain of which Mr. Polyzoides gives, belonged not to the Crimean days but to the time of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 and of the Berlin Congress when Disraeli and Lord Salisbury returned to England with "Peace with Honour." It was the jingoism and brag of it that inspired Mr. Henry Labouchère to indite in his *Truth*, the celebrated

"We don't want to fight

But by Jingo if we do,

We won't go out to fight ourselves

But we'll send the mild Hindu."



There were several ballads of the Crimean time that were naturally jingoistic, the favourite being "Britannia the Pride of the Ocean," but there was another of a distinctly pacifist character, also popular and sung without fear of twenty years or other term of imprisonment. It was adapted from the French and was known as "Jeannette and Jeanot." One stanza, as I remember it, ran:

"If I were King of France  
Or still better Pope of Rome,  
There'd be no fighting men abroad  
No weeping maids at home."

The concluding lines of the stanza were:

"I'd let those that make the quarrels  
Be the only ones to fight."

Those were the sentiments of Jeannette, and may have been those of Jeanot too, though he may not have been so free to express them.

If I am wrong, perhaps Mr. Polyzoides will give the name of the "historian of the Crimean War" on whose authority he relied. It certainly could not be Kinglake. I am, etc.,  
F.

## BOOKS.

### A NOTE ON IBSEN.

MR. JANKO LAVRIN's "psycho-critical" study of Ibsen<sup>1</sup> follows closely upon his book on Dostoevsky. He has still, I believe, to write on Nietzsche and Tolstoy, a peculiarly happy choice, for in these four men is comprehended the European culture of the last fifty years—the culture, and at the same time the failure to attain culture in that time. On all these writers, except Tolstoy in his first great period, there is something disfiguring, the mark of a rationalism which, it is true, was always enlisted against rationalism. In every one of them art was blasted, and from inside, by a necessity to insinuate into it something less triumphant than itself: the "problems" of our time, which are so defacing, so unlike, in their search for unsightly things, the problems of more human eras. All these writers, and Nietzsche by virtue of his "Also Sprach Zarathustra" not least, were artists, but there was among them no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no figure free and well-grown. Flaubert, the most perfect artist who wrote in their time, was not in the same rank as they; he managed in that age to be a good writer by never rising to the point where problems and imperfect art were, things being what they were, the fate of very great men. Like Turgenev he had definitely to specialize himself to avoid greatness and to attain perfection. What were the causes which made the greatest writers of the last half-century less organic than they would have been in any other age it would be idle in the preface to a short essay to try to discover. I hope Mr. Lavrin will give some attention to it in the fifth volume of his work.

His "Ibsen" is an advance in style and method on his "Dostoevsky," being more finished and more athletic. It is entirely different, however, in its temper, which sometimes sharpens to bad temper. The explanation lies before us. Mr. Lavrin is a Slav, and Dostoevsky must remain to him, in spite of himself, a Slav as well as a great writer. By Ibsen temperamentally (and what does that not amount to?) he is repelled, and his criticism, though fair, is only as fair as a defect of sympathy permits. But even antipathy, when it is not blind, and Mr. Lavrin is never blind, is interesting and, as a means for discovering certain truths, valuable. There is more radical criticism of Ibsen in Mr. Lavrin's book than in any other I have read. To begin with, he is never in danger of taking

Ibsen's "ideas" seriously. "His diagnosis of the great Invalid called Modern Society," he says, "is always penetrating; but his prescriptions are neither original nor daring." There is really nothing more to be said about that. How the world could ever have listened without a smile to such *naïvetés* as "I wish to see every man in the land a nobleman," "The minority is always right," or "The strongest man is he who stands alone," remains to this day a mystery. Set beside a single profound and definite aphorism of Nietzsche or a chance remark of one of Dostoevsky's characters, these avowals sound unbearably loose and empty. The ideas in Ibsen's dramas were the ideas of any modern thinker; yet he accepted them, and uttered them, as inspirations. He built his plays upon them, taking as his themes the subjects which any foolhardy mediocrity might have chosen. Here he was worse than false; he was middling. But after admitting this Mr. Lavrin is once more not led astray.

Ibsen's plays as a whole [he says] are as far from being dramatized treatises as they are from being dramatized 'tendency.' The solution of this riddle is simple; instead of illustrating and preaching his ideas through drama, Ibsen individualized them, incarnated them in living characters. He went from ideas to reality, not in order to violate or distort reality by applying ready-made formulæ to it, but to make the ideas *live* in a new and transmuted reality. This proceeding is exactly opposite to that of the 'tendency'-writers. Instead of giving us plays with a moral imposed upon them, he embodies in them their own organic philosophy.

Yet he was not always successful; he was indeed astonishingly less successful than we generally imagine. When there was a hole in one of his characters it was his habit, like the amiable people whom Nietzsche hated so extraordinarily, to fill it up with a "modern idea." In spite of his art the themes of almost all his social dramas remain nothing more than absurd. In "Emperor and Galilean," his "world-historic drama," he was not profound, he was not even shallow. There has surely never been a man with genius equal to his so capable of the kind of seriously intended *gaucherie* which hundreds of lesser writers have never had to struggle to avoid. His very courage was here his worst friend. Nothing daunted him, not even good taste. In "Ghosts," one of his happiest themes, his intrepidity in bad taste fatally ruined the effect. He was not satisfied to make the drama terrible; he had to make it disagreeable as well. The evil of bad taste in a work of art is almost irremediable. It draws us up continually; it prevents us from seeing in its æsthetic integrity the conception of the writer.

Yet Ibsen was a great poet, and nothing can be more interesting than to discover, if that is possible, the cause of his degeneration and final impotence. Mr. Lavrin finds this in his failure to attain "a religious consciousness," or, I should like to add, an artistic one, for in art, too, there is salvation. Lacking the religious sense Ibsen had nothing, Mr. Lavrin says, but moral ideals; and there the drama of his downfall begins.

There were two Ibsens, for while he sought as a hopeful idealist and optimistic 'philosopher,' his innate scepticism was always busy dissecting, analysing, and paralysing. . . . Taken as a whole, Ibsen's writing was mainly conditioned by these two antagonistic tendencies, although by his incredible skill he generally succeeded in welding them into more or less unitary work of art. . . . The closer Ibsen looked at the enigma of man and life the more haunted he was by it; and whenever he sought to find a safer refuge in 'positive' ideals or ideas, his inner honesty compelled him to undermine, sooner or later, his own refuge. He was not a convinced idealist, but only a Tantalus of ideals.

<sup>1</sup> "Ibsen and His Creation: A Psycho-Critical Study." Janko Lavrin. London: Collins.



This is the reason why "The Wild Duck" had to follow "An Enemy of the People," and "When We Dead Awaken," "The Master Builder."

He was never quite sure what to affirm, for in the course of time his 'self-anatomy' stripped one ideal after the other to their bare skeletons. And preferring to be untrue to the ideals rather than to himself, Ibsen gradually arrived at those lonely 'heights' where his soul began to freeze in the thin and icy atmosphere of its own 'spiritual emancipation.' Instead of the great Resurrection Day, he found at the end of his journey emptiness and the cold silence of the desert.

This is Mr. Lavrin's judgment, and the brilliance and truth of it are indisputable. One is carried away with it, and on reflection must agree with it. But in its implications I think there is something not properly human.

What is it that interests us in great men and gives us satisfaction in their existence? That they triumph? That they attain a solution for their lives or for life? That they end their days on the summit of a peak, instead of getting into "a tight place where you can neither get forward nor back" as Ibsen did? Mr. Lavrin requires too stringently for every great man, it seems to me, his own particular pinnacle, his self-built pedestal. He desires the great not to live, but to prevail, and to prevail in a special fashion. But every genuine triumph is obscure, and not to be weighed except by the attainer. Let us turn to Ibsen himself. "To create is to hold a severe trial of oneself." "My task has been the *description of humanity*." "Yes—I must confess that the only thing I love about liberty is the struggle for it." These confessions, disclosing a world of intense experience, tell us more of Ibsen's attainment than Mr. Lavrin's analysis, brilliant as it is; for they show, what indeed does not need to be shown, that Ibsen did attain the only thing possible of attainment by him, and that he did this not at the end of his life merely, but all through it. He spent his life, because desire and necessity ordained it, in a struggle for freedom; he fought to the end and there found the "tight place where you can neither get forward nor back"; and there, by necessity once more, his struggle had to cease. But there is no doubt that he found satisfaction in the battle; strife was his *métier* and his destiny; and in that is the explanation of his success by his own lights and of his failure as a poet. He was too much a warrior, and a warrior in, alas, too commonplace lists, to continue to be a poet after he had expressed himself in "Brand" and "Peer Gynt." "*Gerade dem Helden ist das Schöne aller Dinge Schwerstes*," says Nietzsche, "*unerringbar ist das Schöne allen heftigem Willen*." And Ibsen's will bit into everything it could find in the life around him, eating like an insatiable dragon the slime, the commonest and most monstrous things, when it could find nothing else; but in doing so it exercised and emancipated itself. "To create is to hold a severe trial of oneself," and Ibsen's life was a constant putting of himself in the lists, a more and more severe and unsightly trial of his will against "ghosts" of which he was never afraid, although they were too great for him.

The division in Ibsen's nature, the existence side by side within him of "the hopeful idealist" and "the dissecting sceptic" was no doubt, as Mr. Lavrin says, the sign of his weakness; but nevertheless how rich it was in compensations. The Ibsenian conception of Fate, one of the most interesting in all literature, was fashioned by the action of one of these persons on the other; and that conception, it seems to me, opens a realm which Mr. Lavrin has not surveyed in his acute and truthful book. Ibsen did incarnate modern ideas

in his characters, it is true, but how little that tells us when their whole drama consists in an emancipation from modern ideas. They start with modern ideas, but their development begins with the discovery of that within them which is more essential than an idea: the inward deed whereby they "become what they are." Ibsen's dramas are not dramas of the soul, as it is generally said, but of this inward fate. The problem of his characters is to discover how they can act out of the real and the necessary, and find that affirmation which shall be at once free and true. It led them to many and diverse fates: Nora to nothing more than whim or theory has led many women since; Rosmer and Hedda to suicide; Ellida to happiness. But the solution is always personal, always the individual rule which we call an exception; and nothing can be more absurd than to debate on general grounds whether Nora was justified in leaving her husband and children, or whether Solness should have gone to the top of his house. To do so is to ignore the only thing that is of dramatic or spiritual value in Ibsen's already too ideological dramas: the realization of individual necessity and truth.

There were, indeed, in the end, only two ideas behind the creative manifestations of Ibsen's genius, and these not modern: the ideas of Truth and of Freedom. "The spirits of Truth and of Freedom," says Lona Hessel, "these are the Pillars of Society," and these were also the pillars which supported Ibsen's dramas. They were less ideas than "spirits" as he called them. His "truth" was not metaphysical, but so concrete that taken from its context it must appear commonplace: simple truthfulness. His "freedom" was nothing more than action in accordance with the discovered truth, involving chiefly therefore the power to stand alone and the right to develop from an inner centre. This act of discovery and obedience was to Ibsen Fate, and a volume might be written upon the difference between it and Fate as conceived by Latin writers such as Stendhal and Mérimée. Both these men had very strongly an apprehension of Fate, but it was the Fate of passion unfolding unerringly like a natural process, unthinking, or if thinking, thinking at the dictate of passion. The characters of Stendhal are capable of introspection, but the introspection always "goes into" their action. They never doubt themselves, they only deliberate on what is the best to be done in a problem of love, and it is not the goodness or the truth of their course that concerns them, but its effectualness. To Ibsen Fate is the very opposite of, or rather the emancipation from, this. He did not desire to feel, but to will, inevitably. This was, however, a problem and a conscious task, which he sought to give the infallibility of unconscious things. Feeling was not to him, as it was to Stendhal, something right, but, on the contrary, infinitely deceitful, a problem and not a phenomenon. But Will may become inevitable, and to make it inevitable was to him emancipation. By his occupation with these realities, Ibsen is more interesting humanly than Stendhal, though aesthetically he is less satisfying. He was not concerned with passion, and its nuances therefore simply were not perceived by him; and there is no more puerile concept of love extant than that which he essayed in "Love's Comedy." In every sense he had less love even than Goethe attributed to Platen. But in his intuition of the truth and necessity of the moral nature of mankind he was great.

It was in his poetry, however, that Ibsen was greatest, and we are interested, whatever Mr. Lavrin may



say, not in his psychological antinomies, but in that. "Brand" is the only great tragedy in European literature since "Faust"; and "Peer Gynt" is the greatest poetic comedy since Shakespeare. It is the most severe criticism that I can pass on Mr. Lavrin's book to say that after reading it one would never have suspected this to be the case. He is unduly obsessed with Ibsen's failure to attain a "synthesis," but to talk of that with these two poems beside one is spiritually pedantic, for these are attainment, these are the synthesis which we call art. If Ibsen had not written them we should not have known he was great, and there would have been no reason why Mr. Lavrin should include him in a survey of European culture. These two poems are, it is true, more imperfect than any other poems of the same rank; they are vitiated by a resolve to write a devastating encyclopædia as well as a drama; but nevertheless by their large and easy grasp of human nature, their exuberance and certainty of utterance, by a truth in them, not attained, not studied, but instinctive and immediate, they are in the same rank as "Faust" and "Henry IV." They are not so great and so sure as these, but they have the same accent and are of the same kin. They are among the least poems in the first rank, rather than among the greatest in the second. Ibsen wrote only two great works, and that is because the age in which he lived, and he himself most stridently in that age, demanded something more, or rather something else, from its poets than poetry. So far as I can judge from Mr. Lavrin's book, we still do this, and Ibsen would have been as badly off to-day as he was fifty years ago. The chief value of Mr. Lavrin's book is in its analysis of the spiritual problems of Ibsen's time and of our own. In these matters he is better equipped than any other critic whom I have read; and the subject is a great one.

EDWIN MUIR.

#### A BOOK OF TRAVEL.

It is at once the merit and the defect of this book of travel that it reads like letters: the merit, because it is natural and unpretentious; the defect, because it is *negligé*, loose, wordy, trite. "I am inclined to think that along these lines of work for children and in education lie the greatest satisfactions at present for the aspirations of Italian women. The suffrage is too new and untried an asset to make the political world as yet a great opportunity." One would never suspect from such ill-made sentences, that the writer is a professor of Latin in Vassar College. She tells us of the "story" (is it a story?) of the little girl who needed two pages for each day in her diary, "one for events and the other for 'feelin's.'" The events of her travels are only the usual events, and are scarcely worth publishing, except for her fraternizing with D'Annunzio's Homeric soldiers in the "Epic Days" of Fiume. The feelin's for the most part are still more normal, even when she stands in a piazza for five and a half hours, "unconscious of bodily fatigue," on the anniversary of Vittorio Veneto. She is a normal American; she finds everything interesting, significant, and good; Italy and the Italians are grand.

Yet, after all, the book is redeemed by the professorship of Latin. While most autorial travellers (if the pun may stand) write as if their knowledge of the past were limited to Baedeker's revelations, Miss Haight is, as she might say, on terms of long standing familiarity with classical antiquity, especially classical literature. Of Italy New she writes superficially enough, but of Italy Old she writes much more expertly; and happily she combines the two Italys, as in the charming chapter on "Re-reading Catullus at Sirmio," and in "The Rome that Horace Knew," "Virgil as a Guide in Italy," and "Ovid in Sulmona." These chapters will do for the tourist,

<sup>1</sup> "Italy Old and New." Elizabeth Hazelton Haight. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.50.

either before or after his trip, what most books on Italy fail to do. He will even get, if he wants them, exact references to the classics, such as "Æn. VIII, 714-23." But one word of warning must be added, apropos of the chapter entitled, not too logically "Slabsides and the Sabine Farm: An Imaginary Conversation." This dialogue, though reprinted from the *Classical Journal* (Vol. X, No. etc. etc.), is precisely such a dialogue as the urbane humanist Horace and the sentimental naturalist Burroughs would not have had. The points of likeness between the two lovers of the country are superficial and meaningless; the gap between them in their conception of life is abysmal. It is safe to say that Horace would never have praised either Whitman or Burroughs's "splendid defence" of him, and that he would not have said in bidding farewell to the neighbour of Vassar's young ladies, "John Burroughs, I know one more white soul."

NORMAN FOERSTER.

#### BEAUTY'S SERVANT-CAVALIER.

THE war found Mr. Santayana at Oxford, happy in his rediscovery of cultured England; and the reaction of those four years upon his philosophical temperament is given us in fifty-five essays and allegories written with the felicity and precision of thought that was to be expected. Evading for the moment the inevitable comparison with Walter Pater, it is possible that finer English never has been and never will be written, than that which we have here. The mastery of the instrument was already perfected, and if "Soliloquies in England" seems to mark an enrichment of its tone and an extension of its compass, this is doubtless due to the fact that the period was one peculiarly congenial to the writer's autumnal genius, and his fondness for treading the "sweet way of despair." Not that the war has jolted Mr. Santayana from his accustomed serenity of thought; indeed he is at pains, in one of the most surprising of the essays, to appraise it at something far below the catastrophic importance popularly assigned it. He is too clear-sighted a man not to perceive that civilization on the whole has successfully withstood the shock; and, let us add, too humane a man to imagine that in telling us so, he is conveying any particularly good news. Nevertheless, we do not need the positive evidence of the three fine sonnets given us in his preface, to realize that something happened to Mr. Santayana between 1914 and 1918. The imminence of the peril appears to have reinforced conclusions until then only tentatively held; to have unsealed secret springs not laid open in any of the themes on which he has hitherto projected "the fantasies of his peculiar thought."

As a result there are phrases and whole passages here before which criticism drops its eyes and only the heart responds. What spiritual experience, we wonder, has flamed to the white light of such a message as this: "Existence should be met on its own terms: we may dance a round with it or perhaps steal a kiss, but it tempts us only to flout us, not being dedicated to any constant love." Or this: "The world which torments us is truly beautiful; indeed that is one of its ways of tormenting us; and we are not wrong in loving, but only in appropriating it." With what a fine Castilian gesture he can, when the occasion arises, wrap around him anew the mantle of aloofness, merely by letting this same world know that "the living have never taught me how to live." This is the true classic resonance; this the authentic grand manner.

Meanly to speculate whether the philosopher in Mr. Santayana has always maintained his intellectual integrity, would be a poor return for boons such as these. Sometimes it almost seems that he is a philosopher only by accident, and that the only duty which we can safely assign him is to be Beauty's servant-cavalier. Enthroned Beauty and he will be found on the steps of her dais, the most urbane and decorative of courtiers, with no more than a courtier's concern for the stifled lives that rustle their straw and drag their chains in dungeons beneath. But when she is stricken and a fugitive, we know

<sup>1</sup> "Soliloquies in England." George Santayana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.



that his feet will be swift to follow her along tracks marked by her life blood. Did she lie dead, no one would more touchingly or sincerely intone her threnody. It is this whole-hearted loyalty to beauty that makes us willing to forgive Mr. Santayana so much: the rouged and dandy stoicism; his acceptance at face value of the aspects with which imperialism seeks to beguile its dupes; his furtherance, even though implicitly, of the legend that the war was won by a nation of Rupert Brookes and Donald Hankeys in arms and not by the stubborn valour of generous and misled common men; almost, to leave his greatest fault to the last, his curious obtuseness towards a whole generation of broken and unlovely existence, in whose service others, no less avid of beauty than he, ask nothing better than to spend and to be spent.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

### AN ARTIST'S CRITICISM.

To look over the volumes on art in second-hand book-shops or even to consider the contents of a well selected art-library is to convince oneself that time deals more rigorously with art-critics than with almost any other class of writers. So many men have tried to write on art; so few have left anything that repays reading a score or two of years afterward. Usually one is grateful if the writer eschews the temptation to give philosophic explanations or personal preferences, and sticks to the hard facts of history; there he will be on solid ground, at all events, and will have a documentary usefulness to the future. Most of the æsthetic theorizing of even fifty years ago has gone to such a hopeless oblivion that we become more and more distrustful of the interpreter of art, and are apt to prefer those books that give us concrete testimony about names and dates and places—and are generously illustrated. Such books are essential; when criticism has failed in the past, its failure has often been due to our incomplete knowledge of history, of its extent, of its development, of the relations of cause and effect that brought forth its phenomena. Yet if the writer on art has no more than historical facts to offer, he must confess to ignominious failure, for he has left the reader but little advanced in the matter of understanding art itself.

Mr. Roger Fry's "Vision and Design" proceeds from first-hand experience with a vast number of examples of art to consideration of the significance of the whole subject of art in terms of life. It is with a single point of view that the author treats such various themes as the art of Florence, Ancient American art (the Maya and Aztec), Dürer, the Mohammedan artists, and the Post Impressionists. In view of the diversity of subject, a surprisingly high level of criticism is held throughout the essays, which were written for the art-journals from time to time over a number of years without thought of their subsequent collection into a book. Yet they fit harmoniously into this collection, each one illustrating some phase of the romantic element in art which Mr. Fry calls "vision" or the classical element which he calls "design."

These essays are not the work of a specialist in even the broadest field of criticism, but are rather chapters in the experience of a painter. Mr. Fry, who was formerly curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, is less known here in the rôle of painter than he is in London or Paris; but it is the evolution of an artist's mind that gives cohesion and unity to this collection of articles.

His special interest throughout these essays lies in tracing the relation between the mind of the artist and that of the world of his time. He admits a connexion between the two but strongly warns his readers against a too-easy explanation of art by environment. A foot-note recently appended to his study of Giotto (first published in 1901) shows his progressive realization of the difficulty of ascertaining how far the artist expresses his ideas about his subject, how far he is influenced by the ideas of his time, and how far he is dealing with a force distinct from the ideas associated with his subject—a force

which finds its expression in his work by means of pure form. Mr. Fry points out the intricacy of the problem presented, for instance, by a picture like Raphael's "Transfiguration," which combines æsthetically pleasurable elements with the painful associations connected with its subject. (Is it not in "The Newcomes" that Thackeray notes a similar conflict of feeling—with a remark that the great harmony is marred by the scream of the boy possessed by demons?) Mr. Fry himself quotes Goethe's comment on the picture—an example of what was evidently a deep and sure appreciation expressing itself in terms that the modern critic would sedulously avoid; for our present tendency is towards a recognition of the artist's proper means of design and colour, whereas Goethe's "explanation of his feeling took the form of a moral and philosophical reflection."

It was, of course, revolt against the "literary" explanation of art (and the epithet is as wrong as the method it was intended to stigmatize) that led Mr. Clive Bell to the opposite pole of the question in his conclusions about "significant form," in his brilliant book, "Art." This work was strongly influenced by the author's conversations with Mr. Fry, who, while bearing witness to the benefit that has been derived from the purely æsthetic hypothesis, believes that we can yet establish a closer relationship between the functions of vision and design.

Mr. Fry does not, however, confine himself to the problems of art-theory. Some of the best criticisms of the great Frenchmen of recent times are among the writings of this author, for he came to appreciate their work before he evolved his theories concerning it. He makes, too, some keen observations on drawing, in his essay on the exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. Here, in the presence of works by men before, during and after the Renaissance, he finds that in the early schools "the drawing was less descriptive and more purely evocative of form." It was the scientific investigators of the Renaissance and the later centuries who drew us away from the appreciation of pure contour; it is men like Matisse, continues the critic, who have recovered it for us. Similarly incisive is his appreciation of the sculpture of the African wood-carvers, who conceived their work as a thing of three dimensions, whereas so many statues in the Græco-Roman tradition are in reality combinations of bas-reliefs of the front, side and back views of the figure.

I should feel ungrateful for the pleasure I have had in various re-readings of the essay on Claude Lorraine, in the fifteen years since it was first published, did I fail to make at least a mention of the perfection with which it summarizes the exquisite qualities of the great landscapist. The paper is indeed a model of analysis, for while the artist's fine qualities are duly appraised, his limitations are not spared; "for there is assuredly a kind of beauty which is not only compatible with these defects but perhaps in some degree depends on them."

In the essay on "Art and Socialism," amid some powerful characterizations of the nineteenth century, there are some sentences on its worship of *patine* which seem worthy of quotation: "*Patine* is good, but it is a surface-charm added to the essential beauty of expression; its beauty is literally skin-deep. . . . It is an adjectival and ancillary beauty scarcely worthy of our prolonged contemplation." For one who could find so felicitous a description as that contained in the word "adjectival" we are surely justified in reversing a famous *mot* of Whistler's and saying "he also writes."

Mr. Fry does not entitle the last chapter of his work Conclusion, for he knows that endless questions are ahead of him, and other investigators. But an understanding of art is here presented with such force and clearness that this book will, it seems to me, have permanent value. The schools of art succeed one another, but our interest in the older masters is not lessened by the coming of new masters with new ideas to express. These, however, must—in order to be recognized as masters—carry on something of the traditions of the past; and in doing so they will find much that is useful in the ideas which Mr. Fry has so well expressed.

WALTER PACH.

<sup>1</sup> "Vision and Design." Roger Fry. New York: Brentano's. \$7.50.



## SHORTER NOTICES.

THE school of the American humorous essayist—if the term school may be applied to anything which has so slight a regard for discipline—is seemingly a pleasant paradise in which the study-periods are continually being robbed to provide a longer recess. The yard is filled during a good part of the time with lusty players, playing tag with phrases, enjoying one another's company, and apparently not caring greatly whether school keeps or not. They are amiable and athletic; they applaud each other's palpable hits; their goal is likely to be an ephemeral quip rather than an enduring wit. In his book called "Turns About Town,"<sup>1</sup> one finds Mr. Holliday displaying his fondness for the game—a game in which he scores with facility and grace. Doubtless the fact that much of the material gathered between these covers has been retrieved from newspaper-syndication may explain most of the shortcomings, but surely there is a sufficient number of toilers in the sweat-shops of slang without Mr. Holliday rolling up his sleeves and dipping into "yep" and "holler" and "gotta" and "awful rusty." When the author cheerfully admits that his "literature is getting awful rusty," there is nothing to do but to agree with him. However, some one should point out to Mr. Holliday that—as every housewife knows—rust-stains are difficult to remove.

L. B.

MR. CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM, it is quite safe to say, does not enjoy a host of readers who could make a respectable showing against the hordes that many a lesser writer has assembled beneath his banner. One needs, to be sure, a knowledge of something more than the alphabet to relish him. He is that rare combination, a man of action and a man of letters. His body has roamed over the far places of the globe, and his spirit has followed. The peoples of Spanish America and of Brazil owe him a special debt for having brought to the attention of English readers the history and personality of those lands, in a picturesque prose that achieves distinction despite a sometimes evident effort to appear conversational. He writes, apparently, to elucidate; and surely his present work<sup>2</sup> and those that have preceded it, illuminate a forest of facts with the sunshine of discernment. Yet whether Cunningham-Graham writes of a Brazilian mystic or of the conquest of what is now known as Colombia, he is at bottom the same ironic humanist, with a sly twinkle in his eye and the suspicion of a curl on his lip. In the story of these valiant *conquistadores* who, under the leadership of Ximenez de Quesada, founded New Granada between 1530 and 1540, one feels that he admires the men of action for qualities that he himself shares, just as he was led to write of them by a personal visit to the territory over which they made their marvellous progress. He does not view the deeds of the conquerors from any lofty moral eminence; he has not set out to apportion merit or disgrace. He admires them frankly for their superhuman heroism and for exploits that it would be hard to parallel in those ancient histories with which the world is better acquainted. What, indeed, can the historical novel, except at its very best, show to compare with the sheer accomplishment of these *conquistadores*? As for their greed, their cruelty, their lust, we are too near to the days of blood and treasure to condemn. These things, and others, Mr. Cunningham-Graham so well understands that his books are attractive and refreshing.

I. G.

LIFE has its absurdities as well as its problems; and if we would know life, it is debatable which is the better subject for our study. It is sometimes difficult to separate them, because the problems are frequently the result of the absurdities. So is it in this amusing story by Mr. Alington<sup>3</sup>. The plot is slight and artificial, dealing with the contrivances of Sir Richard Atherton, Bart., to give a house party to a wealthy American woman and her daughter. The mother's opinions concerning prohibition and spiritualism and the necessity of having a hostess in a bachelor's establishment are the springs of the action, which involves assumed identities. These assumed identities start a chain of complications that are unquestionably funny, bewildering in their ramifications, and all but inexhaustible in their abundance. The story is good enough to make one wish it were better. It moves with amazing speed, but perhaps with a speed that is too amazing. Transformations occur too quickly and situations are developed with an arbitrariness that suggests a clever stage-manager rather than a gifted revealer of human folly.

<sup>1</sup>"Turns About Town." Robert Cortes Holliday. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$2.00.

<sup>2</sup>"The Conquest of New Granada." R. B. Cunningham-Graham. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$4.00.

<sup>3</sup>"Through the Shadows." Cyril Alington. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.

One can not but regret that the author did not give closer consideration to the portrayal of character. His characters, thinly drawn, sink to conventional types and become mere puppets necessary to the conduct of the plot. Mrs. Branson is the stage American, afflicted with an ignorance and a credulity that were more prevalent a generation ago, and the Archdeacon is a comic-supplement schoolmaster. The dialogue is sometimes clever, though never witty, and rather the sort of speech which will help the situation than that which would inevitably come from the speaker. The result of these shortcomings is that what might have been keen satire is simply bright caricature. Nevertheless the book is fresh and amusing, and to those who want light entertainment it can be heartily recommended.

J. L. T.

## A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

My day's work includes a careful examination of publishers' lists, and I am thus made aware of the excessively high price of books, and thereby led to wonder about the prospects for any higher degree of general intelligence in this country. The army tests brought the status of intelligence under considerable discussion. The statistics of literacy were pretty well known, and their showing was certainly discreditable enough; but the intelligence-tests, with all possible allowance for roughness and inexactness, revealed a bad state of affairs. Our participation in the war may almost be justified if it turns out to have established in any large popular way, the fact that intelligence does not follow upon literacy as closely as has been generally taken for granted. The ability to read is no sign of intelligence, nor does it of itself put one much in the way of becoming intelligent. Large numbers of our people read a great deal, and are extremely unintelligent. One may look about among one's personal acquaintance and perceive that many of those who read most are far less intelligent than some who read little or hardly read at all. The army tests did a good service in waking up educators to see the force of this highly practical distinction.

LITERACY may be an asset, but with respect to intelligence, it may also be, and very often is, a liability. Everything depends upon what one reads. One who reads a great deal in newspapers and popular magazines and nothing else, is worse off in point of intelligence than one who is unable to read anything; and large numbers of readers do just that. I say explicitly "and nothing else," because in the choice of reading it is perfectly possible, indeed probable, that a person may make progress towards intelligence by merely following his nose. He will, that is to say, move from bad literature to better literature if better literature be available on the same terms as bad literature, or anything like the same terms. If it be not thus available, he will keep on with bad literature. Now it is quite obvious that good literature is not thus available. The business of publishing is so organized as expressly to keep bad literature cheap and plentiful, and to keep good literature scarce and dear. There is a suffocating volume of ephemeral trash, of newspapers and magazines; but the scarcity and dearth of good books is really incredible. Until I took on the duties of this literary editorship I had no idea how scarce and dear they are.

In France, years ago, Madame Sand became aware of the popular tendency to gravitate towards good literature when it is to be had; and she took the publisher Lévy almost literally by the ear and forced him into the experiment of giving France cheap paper-bound books. From that day to this, such books have been the staple of French publishing. The business has been organized on the scale set by cheap paper-bound books. French publishers are diligent as ants in bringing out the latest thing in trash; their shelves are full of it. But side by side with the trash, in perfectly fair and free competition with it—the same price, same paper, typography, binding, everything scrupulously the same—they keep a full line of the very best books in the world. German publishers have done even better; with their *Ernst der ins Ganze geht*, they have improved and cheapened good literature—espe-



cially in the matter of translations—somewhat at the expense of the trash. I wish I could put before my readers some specimens of French and German translations, say of Poe's stories, and put beside them the cheapest issue of Poe to be found here in the land of his birth. In point of cheapness, Russian publishers did best of all. I do not know how it is now, but in the old days, when one started on a railway-journey or embarked on a river-steamer, one could freight up with one of Dickens's novels for about the price of a newspaper, and throw it away at the end of the trip with no great feeling of extravagance. Russian publishers did an incredible volume of business in cheap good books.

THE French, German and Russian publishers do not, I may say, pursue this policy out of any inflated notions of public service, but because it pays. Madame Sand won her point with Calmann Lévy by convincing him that there was money in it. By issuing cheap good books in straight competition with cheap bad books, these publishers nurse a complete market. People buy and read more books; they are continually passing from bad books to better ones, and always buying. Their appetite grows by what it feeds on, and frequently after a taste of a paper-bound book, they decide that it is one to be kept, and replace their copy with one bound in leather. The business is organized to cover and stimulate a whole continuous line of trade. In this country, and to a great extent in England, there is a large area of market lying between the magazine and the two-dollar book, that remains uncultivated; and as long as it remains uncultivated, a book-reading public, properly speaking, is not developed. I do not know the statistics of book-reading in this country; but I should be greatly surprised if they show that the book-reading public is relatively as large as it was twenty-five years ago. I hear that publishers are not doing much of late and are feeling blue; but with their business organized as it is, I only wonder that they do anything.

To be explicit, I believe that there are many now reading newspapers and popular magazines who would read something better if it were anything like as handy and cheap as the newspapers and magazines are—and handiness is as important as cheapness. In the course of writing these Notebooks, I have often had the pleasure of praising certain books; and I am sure that among my readers there are many who would cheerfully take a chance on them if they could get them easily and for little money. In France, Germany or Russia they could get them with no trouble at all for almost nothing. Here, however, they can get them only with difficulty and for at least two dollars; and two dollars in these days represents a considerable venture of faith. There is nothing for these readers, in short, between what they are now reading and the two-dollar book; and therefore they read books only occasionally and fitfully, do not acquire the book-reading and book-buying habit, and so the book-reading public, upon which publishers must depend, loses a whole generation of recruits. The Continental publishers are fully aware of the force of habit in book-buying, and they make it as easy as falling off a log for the largest possible public to acquire the habit. The English and American publishers, on the other hand, seem to be doing all they can to break up the habit in anyone who has it, and to prevent anyone who does not have it from getting it.

It has often seemed to me that publishers of books could learn something from publishers of gramophone-disks. No one can fail to be impressed by the advances in music, especially good music, made in this country in the past ten years; and curiosity having led me to look into the matter a little, I have found that the gramophone has helped this progress much more, perhaps, than one would think. The manufacturers seem to have adopted the same policy with their disks that the Continental publishers have with their books. They put out an unconscionable deal of trash; but with it they also put out a great deal of good music at the same price. Their higher-priced

disks (which I observe have been greatly cheapened of late) correspond to the publishers' leather-bound books. For instance, the Victor Company will for the price of the lowest cabaret-jazz that they publish, sell one a disk of the quartette from "Rigoletto" far better done than by the artists represented on their higher-priced disk; but if one likes the price and for any reason prefers these artists, one can buy the higher-priced disk. It is interesting to go through the Victor Company's catalogue and see that almost invariably such a choice is offered—a cheap disk and a mighty good one against a higher-priced disk done by artists whose names are known here. The marginal market, that is, which is continually crowding up between bad music and high-priced good music, is competently cared for and encouraged; and thus an appreciative disk-buying public is continually built up, enlarged, educated and strengthened in its habit.

THIS strikes me as sterling good business sense; and my hope is that by stress of hard weather, if by no gentler means, the book-publishers will be brought to reorganize their business on a corresponding policy of giving the country plenty of cheap books. Cheap paper-bound trash too, by all means—let them keep on putting out all the trash that they now issue, but let them also put out cheap paper-bound good books in straight competition with the trash. Good books, I mean, in all branches of literature, even the scientific and technical. There happens to be before me now a French treatise on mathematical logic, just issued, paper-bound, of which I do not understand a single word, unfortunately, but which, if I did, I could purchase for the price of M. Paul Bourget's latest novel. There are also before me paper-bound editions of Æschylus and Juvenal, with which I am perhaps more at ease than with works on mathematics; they are issued by the Association Guillaume Budé, marvels of scholarship and of press-work, and they come to something like seventy cents apiece, I think. Compared with these, the far more costly issues of the Loeb classics look pretty forlorn. If one wants them in leather binding, as probably most who could afford it would, one may have them—indeed, there is even a *de luxe* issue of them on special paper, at a rousing price, for those who are so minded. But the point is that those who can not afford them leather-bound, or for any reason prefer them at the lower price, may have them as they are.

No American publisher, probably, is in the position of Calmann Lévy, able single-handed to enforce a general change of policy. He could not make headway alone against the *vis inertiae* so long cultivated in readers by the magazines and Sunday supplements; he could not overcome the resistance of distributors and retailers, or put into effect a scheme of distribution that would nullify their resistance. He could not explode the fetishes and dogmas of the trade, such, for instance, as "the American people won't buy paper-bound books." He could not manage satisfactorily with authors and their royalties. But a combination of publishers could do all these things, I believe, without much trouble and with great advantage to their business in the long run. Concerted action, if such a thing is possible, among half a dozen of the principal houses, would be enough, I think, to reorganize the entire business of publishing. My own interest in the matter is purely in behalf of civilization. I should like to see this nation become more highly civilized, which it can not do without books, can not possibly do on its present debilitating diet of newspapers and magazines; and with the book-reading habit so discouraged by scarcity and dearness, its prospects are not good. But I do not press this point. I merely suggest that a concerted action of publishers in behalf of cheap, paper-bound books of all kinds and in all branches of literature, would be a first-class stroke of business, and that the experience of other countries has proved it so. The book-market, like all markets, needs cultivation; and I am convinced that a large and highly arable area of that market is now going utterly to waste, and that the co-operation of publishers in behalf of a new policy would reclaim it.



THIS time we will let Professor J. B. Bury do our talking for us. He is a great scholar; we venture, from the fact that the "Encyclopædia Britannica" calls him a "British" historian and states that he "was born" without telling us where, that Professor Bury is an Irishman. British or Irish, he "hitteth the naile on the hed."

A few weeks ago we tried to answer the unfriendly critics who aver that the FREEMAN is merely "destructive" and, as we may have failed to convince, we now yield the floor to Professor Bury :

*But he [Voltaire] has been sometimes decried on the ground that he only demolished and made no effort to build up where he had pulled down. This is a narrow complaint. It might be replied that when a sewer is spreading plague in a town, we can not wait to remove it till we have a new system of drains. . . . But the true answer is that knowledge, and therefore civilization, are advanced by criticism and negation, as well as by construction and positive discovery. When a man has the talent to attack with effect falsehood, prejudice, and imposture, it is his duty, if there are any social duties, to use it.*

We are trying to advance "knowledge, and therefore civilization" and, heaven knows, there is enough "falsehood, prejudice, and imposture" about to engage the attention of one hundred weeklies. Under the circumstances, and in view of the high satisfaction of the majority of our readers, the FREEMAN will pursue its accustomed course.

The FREEMAN'S circulation is at its high-water mark. This is due, in large part, to the cordial response to our request for names of prospective readers and to the readiness with which FREEMAN subscribers are co-operating in our effort to double our circulation by Christmas. If you have not yet manifested your desire to help, may we ask you to do so this week? A new subscriber, a list of the best men and women you know.

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